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ABSTRACT

These four issues of The Quarterly of the National Writing Project cover the calendar year 1989. The January 1989 issue contains the following articles: (1) "The Unteachables" (J. Juska); (2) "Changing the Model" (M. Griffith and others); (3) "Literate Cultures: Multi-Voiced Classrooms" (M. Roemer); (4) "Despite the Heat: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Athens" (W. Strachan); (5) book reviews by J. Maitino and C. Anderson; and (6) "Imagery: Thinking with the Mind's Eye" (P. Riley). The April 1989 issue contains the following: (1) "Teacher Research: Toward Clarifying the Concept" (S. Lytle and M. Cochran-Smith); (2) "Teacher-Researchers: Their Voices, Their Continued Stories" (M. Mohr and others); (3) a book review by D. McQuade; (4) "The Wall" (J. Juska); and (5) an annotated bibliography of teacher research. The Summer 1989 issue contains the following: (1) "Exchanging Writing, Exchanging Cultures" (S. W. Freedman); (2) "Real Voices for Real Audiences" (J. Cone); (3) "London Calling" (S. Reed); (4) "The Response Factor" (K. Chapman); (5) "Building a Literate Community" (A. Dunstan); (6) book reviews by A. Peterson and J. Herman; and (7) "Electronic Writing: The Autobiography of a Collaborative Adventure" (J. Flinn). The Fall 1989 issue contains the following: (1) "Teachers and Researchers: Roles and Relationships" (C. Cazden and others); (2) "Research, Recalibration, and Conversation" (S. Florio-Ruane); (3) "Beyond Lived Experience in Writing Research" (C. Bereiter); (4) "California's New Writing Assessment" (C. Cooper and B. Breneman); (5) book reviews by D. Dellinger and H. Nelson; and (6) "NWP Report: A Multi-School Consortium to Promote Writing Across the Curriculum: The BACWAC Model" (H. Dowling, Jr.). (SR)

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Jane Juska

The Unteachables

At my school they're called the Bs. After their ninth grade year, they are tracked into the non-college, terminal classes. And so they take English IIB, English IIIB, and English IVB. Along the way, many of them take night school courses to make up for the classes they've flunked in regular school; lots of them take drug classes instead of going to juvenile hall or paying huge fines.

Here is what William Glasser says in his *Control Theory in the Classroom* to people like me who teach the Bs:

> *Unless you have had your head in the sand, you cannot fail to agree that about half of the secondary students in your regular classes make no consistent effort to learn...It is also obvious that as much as you know that this serious situation exists, you seem powerless to change this frustrating situation...*

Over the years I have become very fond of my Bs. They are truthful, painfully so; they are often funny (and yes, sullen); they are free from artifice; their greediness extends beyond grades to important things like pick-ups and Heavy Metal. And, for reasons unclear to me, I trust them. I trust them not to trash my car; I trust them to know which eye shadow looks best at night; I trust them because, evidence sometimes to the contrary, I believe they are good people. But Glasser is right: my Bs "make no consistent effort to learn" and so far I have been "powerless to change this frustrating situation."

Further, and this is no doubt one of the roots of my frustration, the responsibility for learning falls upon me. I have known for a long time that I work harder in my classes than any of my kids. And I learn more. It doesn't matter how much fun I

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The Unteachables

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...they hate school and cut school and fail school ... I believe that's because, while school offers them survival and belonging, at the same time it refuses them power and freedom.

try to make "Fall of the House of Usher"; I am the one getting deeper and deeper into the story; the kids are the ones having the fun. Sometimes, they have fun watching me get off on some weird psychoanalytic tack, something about how Madeleine Usher is really Guilt. "Oh yeah?" they say. And turn to more important business.

What to do? Dr. Glasser, talk to me.

> *...humans not only need 1) to survive and reproduce, but also 2) to belong and love, 3) to gain power, 4) to be free and 5) to have fun.*

So what does this say about my Bs? My Bs do not drop out of school. They do not want to take the GED or go to continuation high. They get enough from regular school to continue their attendance here. What that is, I'm not sure: friends surely; more likely, a structure for lives that often are frayed around the edges if not bombed out in the center. School is for these kids a relatively safe place. But they hate school and cut school and fail school, and if Dr. Glasser is right, I believe that's because, while school offers them survival and belonging, at the same time it refuses them power and freedom. I am part of that school; for 55 minutes every day, I am school. What would happen if I turned over my power to them? After 25 years of teaching, I decide to find out.

September rolls around (it always does), and I get scared. There they are, all Bs and not yet friendly. How can I say something completely off the wall like "Well, guys, I'm turning the classroom over to you"? I can't, so I play it safe. I get out E.A. Poe and we, excuse me, I learn a little more about Madeleine and Roderick. The kids know where I am coming from (center stage) and I know where they are (in the lobby). All is going as expected. But not all is going well.

E.A. Poe under our, whoop, my belt once again, I decide to go for it. This is what I have thought about for a year. This is the beginning of my experiment. I am manipulating them, I'll admit it, into thinking about learning. I say, coolly, casually, pretending like I don't really care, "Let's talk about reading." "What for?" "Well," I say, "why should we read?" "Oh, yeah?" This time the 'yeah' is different. This time, it translates into "Hey, here's something kind of interesting." I take a deep breath. We are on our way.

So we talk, just a little bit, and then we write what we think are some answers to that question. Here's what Shaari wrote: "If you don't know how to read it's like you are blind. Except it's not your eyes-sight. It's in your mind." And Matt: "The reason I read is because I don't want to be embarresed about how I can't."

Most of the papers, somewhere in the midst of complaints about being forced to read, hating to read, come to something similar. I am awash in enthusiasm. "O.K., then let's read. Here is the list of books in our bookroom. Do you want to read different books? All the same book? What?"

They look at me; at least, they look at me. Some are open-mouthed; most eye me with suspicion. What is going on here? Undeterred, I say, "Well, get into your writing groups and decide." (They had chosen their own writing groups in September, their first sign, had they recognized it, that things in this class might be different.) "So what are those books about?" they want to know. A great question. I answer it. They move into their groups, decide they want to read one book together as a whole class (the Standard Operating Procedure of English classes) and that it should be *Ordinary People*.

Day two I put on the board: "Objective: to read *Ordinary People* with student involvement and understanding. Challenge: to devise a plan by which this can be done. Task: to come up with, in your group, a plan of attack. How much should we read? Homework? What would you do in class? What should the teacher do?"

Everybody gets into their groups and every group comes up with a different plan of attack. (Do not despair, I say to myself; they bought the Objective and Challenge.) So we put all the plans on the board, and select the most common elements of each. The Ideal Plan of Attack comes out this way:

Getting people involved:

no discussions unless students want to
class meets in groups every couple of days to discuss chapters read if they want to

Assignments:

10 chapter per week (10 pages a night) so we can finish by Christmas

homework only if reading not done in class
one-half hour per day for reading, or every other day in class
Fridays, free read
vocabulary should come from the book

The Teacher will:

make out quizzes, tests
read whatever book she wants
not talk unless she is asked
show the movie at the end

In my mind's eye, a vast desert opens, peopled by students wandering aimlessly about, some carrying books, most not, one explaining to an adult shade, "Well, our teacher said to do anything we want." And, even more depressing, "anything we want" excludes the teacher: I am not wanted. Except yes, I am still the keeper of the gate; I should be the examiner, maybe slip the quizzes and tests (multiple choice, Scantron) under the door, pick them up after class, and slide the results back under. My feelings are hurt. But I won't let them know. You know what happens to wounded animals in the jungle.

Instead, I say something like, "What about those class discussions? And those quizzes and those vocabulary words? Should I do them or should you?" By now, minds are churning, eyes are glistening, I can almost hear the, Oh, man, I could come out of this class with a fuckin A! "Yeah, I think we could." Oh, and are they ever earnest. "Like we should handle those things." "How?" "In our groups!" Yippee! they're doing it; they're going to be the teacher!

Then I tell them, "This is my class, too, and I need some writing from you so I can be a part of this whole thing." They are surprised I am interested in being part of what they think is a pretty shabby little operation, but obviously I am, especially when I tell them, well finally confess, that my feelings were hurt when they left me out of their Ideal Plan. So they let me show them about reading logs and agree to do a couple. "For now."

I am also genuinely puzzled as to how I am to know how well small group discussions are going, seeing as how, according to their plan, I'm hardly in the room. "Trust us," Shannon tells me. "Oh, bull," says Russ. "You know she can't trust us." So, they agree that I can watch their discussions. "For now." "What about grades?" I ask. "Do you want any kind of evaluation?" "Well, sure, we want grades! So give us points when you watch us! And you should grade us on our vocabulary quizzes and discussions too!" The A looms ever larger in their heads. As for me, I'm just glad to be back in the room.

A week swims by; it is dreamy, that is to say, sometimes wild and definitely weird: the kids read and write and talk about

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Editor's Note

"In an increasingly complex technological and multicultural society, the questions that surround writing—how it develops; how it connects to such processes as reading, speaking, and thinking; what its relationship is to identity and power; and how we can best teach it—take on urgency and demand answers." These are words that we have put into a new brochure from the Center for the Study of Writing. I've pilfered them here for my own purposes: I thought they made a fitting anchor for Quarterly *1989, as they capture the concerns that drive our teaching and our research and so capture the kinds of issues that we attempt to address in this publication. They give me a way, too, to undergird a call for articles, which we hope you will submit to us for consideration in the coming months. While we get a good number of submissions—some that we solicit and some that come unsolicited—we feel lucky to have received as many manuscripts as we have without having put out a formal call. With the coming of the new year we want to issue such a call. We would like to hear from the spectrum of educators who comprise our readership—teachers of English and language arts and teachers who use writing across the curriculum; researchers investigating writing and the teaching and learning of writing; administrators and policymakers concerned about literacy and writing in our schools; teacher educators. . . . You have stories to tell, research to report, ideas to discuss. Let us hear from you.*

This issue represents a part of the spectrum. Jane Juska, who teaches English in secondary school, writes about a semester of experimental teaching with at-risk students, and how she relinquished her position at the center of the classroom. Marlene Griffith, Bruce Jacobs, Smokey Wilson and Margot Dashiell, who teach in a range of subjects at a community college, write also about students at-risk, and about a major project they developed that addresses these students' personal and educational needs. Their project has implications for all levels of schooling. Marjorie Roemer, a university English professor, relating her experience with a summer literature institute, addresses methods of teaching literature that shift authority from teacher to students. Peggy Riley, community college teacher of English, also discusses the teaching of literature, specifically, the use of writing to learn poetry. We are pleased to include, too, book reviews from John Maitino and Chris Anderson.

Happy reading. Happy 1989.

--M.S.

Marlene Griffith, Bruce Jacobs, Smokey Wilson, and Margot Dashiell

Changing the Model: Working with Underprepared Students

The time came when I found myself getting more and more less motivated. —Louise, a Project Bridge student.

When Louise talks about her problems learning basic skills, she is, without knowing it, also saying something important about the programs offered students like her. Researchers have proposed theories; politicians have funded new programs; teachers at all levels have tried to help. Yet in America today, the number of functionally illiterate adults is still growing—23 million according to the Department of Education (1983) or as many as 60 million according to Jonathan Kozol (1984). Like their students, teachers across the land find themselves "getting more and more less motivated."

Many of these adults have sat through, or dropped out of, conventional remedial classes in junior and senior high schools. They have learned little. How can we work with students who cannot read, write, or multiply at an appropriate level so that they succeed in academic and vocational programs?

Project Bridge is a community college program for remedial students who are so unprepared for academic work that they are often considered beyond hope educationally. The program is working. A significant number of Bridge students successfully complete regular college courses leading to certificates and degrees. Others improve their skills sufficiently to get jobs that don't deadend.

The Bridge model need not be confined to community colleges. It can be adapted for underprepared students in junior high schools, middle schools, and high schools. What is needed is a core group of committed teachers, a supportive administrator who knows how to work the bureaucracy, and a willingness to change teaching strategies.

The model we describe in detail below creates a school within a school. Logistical changes make possible pedagogical changes; a curriculum rich in content and ideas is substituted for content-less, idea-less skills classes. Students and teachers together build a sense of community that overcomes the isolation of both student and teacher.

Existing Remedial Programs

What do programs offer the growing number of remedial students in middle schools, high schools, and community colleges? As a rule, remedial means repetitive, the same paper-and-pencil drills, with few classroom activities, little interaction, little discussion. In these remedial classes, learners are often kept distant from ideas, from mathematical experiences that require more than memorization, from exploring the meaning of what they read, from writing. Too many of their class hours are filled with drills on spelling, punctuation, word attack, and multiplication tables. Thus, we see a vicious cycle of non-achievement: year after year, basic skills students are kept away from ideas until they become "more skilled." But they do not become more skilled because they are kept from ideas.

Profile of the Students

In 1977, Mina Shaughnessy broke new ground when she took seriously the group of students whom she describes as "true outsiders . . . strangers in academia, unacquainted with the rules and rituals of college life, unprepared for the sorts of tasks their teachers were . . . to assign them." These new students who enrolled in increasing numbers as open admission policies were instituted had been left so far behind the others in their formal education that they appeared to have little chance of catching up. Shaughnessy describes them as having grown up in " . . . ethnic or racial enclaves," speaking languages or dialects at home different from the academic language of the school. Most of them had never successfully reconciled the worlds of home and school, a fact which "had worked its way deep into their feelings about school and about themselves as students" (pp. 2-3).

We can presume that many of these students are the adult counterparts of the children whom some researchers in the 1960s had—and it now seems clear, wrongheadedly—characterized as "linguistically and culturally deficient" (Deutsch, 1967), and whom others a few years later termed "culturally different" (Labov, 1972; Kochman, 1972; Heath, 1983). They sometimes take for granted—now as they did as young-

sters—that the way school is "spozed to be" (Herndon, 1960) is irrelevant, distant, and a place for failure. But many nevertheless still hope to bend education to serve their needs and so improve their lives.

Carol is one of these students. A single mother of four, she is determined to become a vocational nurse. She moved to Oakland from Arizona, since education in California was tuition-free and seemed more accessible. When she entered college, she took the entry test for the Licensed Vocational Nursing program. The required score was sixty-six percent. She scored eight percent. She has been going to classes to improve this score and at the same time raising her children in a new and unfamiliar city.

Everett is another: a man of twenty-six whose combined street, army, and prison experiences had left him with a future full of questions and almost no notion about how to resolve them; in spite of repeated disppointments in school, he hopes to make something of himself if he gets an education. Jeremiah had to drop Upward Bound in Kentucky when his wife became pregnant; now he returns to school in California ten years later to become the welder he started out to be. Linda and Betty, cutting class and eating countless packages of potato chips, are no clearer about what they want to do at twenty-five than they were at sixteen, and it is evident that as yet they do not have the basic skills or the attitude about work necessary to move out of remedial programs. Eve enrolled in community college twelve years ago but child care problems forced her to drop out; now after years of minimum wage jobs, she wants the skills to get better permanent work.

The basic skills—reading, writing, and mathematics—present major problems to these students. They have limited academic vocabularies, inadequate word-attack strategies, difficulty identifying a main idea in a passage, and problems inferring information from a given text. Many have done little reading since high school; some have never read a whole book. They are also inexperienced and nonfluent writers. Most have difficulty filling a single page, organizing their thoughts on paper, providing detail, and even more trouble with paragraphing, spelling and punctuation. Faced with a writing task, they often feel a high level of anxiety and say they have nothing to write about. Finally, their math, on the whole, is limited to work with whole numbers; often they don't understand the written instructions in the math book.

Carol, Everett and Jeremiah, Linda and Betty, Eve and all the others cannot read, write or compute well enough to move beyond entry-level jobs, complete college programs, or participate fully as informed citizens in mainstream society. Yet they keep families together on limited budgets, often work odd hours in order to attend school, juggle home and school responsibilities—all because they view the community college as a route to a better life.

The Bridge model need not be confined to community colleges. It can be adapted for underprepared students in junior high schools, middle schools, and high schools.

Program Description

Goals. Traditional remedial approaches to education have viewed the seriously underprepared adult learner as deficient in a series of basic skills. For example, the student is viewed as needing to learn how to write a topic sentence or punctuate and capitalize properly in order to write, or to learn the rules for operations with fractions in order to compute satisfactorily. In Project Bridge, we have come to understand that the essential goal of a remedial program is indeed to help the student catch up, but topic sentences or capitalization do not receive our primary attention. Instead, we have defined our task to be one of teaching students:

To understand and use school language and to perform school tasks. After mention of essays in class, an incoming student wrote in her journal, "What is an S. A.?" Such a student needs more than practice in spelling or paragraph development; she needs to understand and practice using the concepts that school language is designed to convey.

To approach new information analytically; to make explicit connections between ideas, and between those ideas and one's experience. Students must come to recognize that percentages, for example, express the same information as decimals; or that the short story is more than a series of recounted events but has theme, setting, characters, and may even demonstrate concepts taught in sociology (e.g., role models).

To participate in an academic community. Relationships between students need to shift so as to include school-centered as well as social relations, including questions such as "How did you do that homework problem?" or "What do you think about that play we saw?"

We do not claim to teach students to talk or to think. We do claim to show students who certainly know how to think and speak to utilize these abilities in the academic setting.

Project Bridge makes it possible for students to acquire "basic" skills through the following strategies and organizational principles, presented here as a framework for practice.

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This framework helps teachers to usher students across the great divide from school failure to academic competence; it seems to reduce the number of missteps and increase the likelihood of a successful transition.

Strategies. Four strategies are basic to this program.

1. *Student-centered classroom.* The first strategy places student need in the center of the curriculum. In most college courses, the goal of instruction is to impart a fixed body of knowledge or to have the student acquire a level of skill in a specific period of time (Intermediate Algebra, English 1A). Most Bridge students find the fixed tempo of such learning difficult. Yet the alternative of self-paced program learning assumes a student motivated by subject matter itself or by clear personal goals, assumptions teachers in basic skills courses can rarely make. Students usually drop out of such classes. Project Bridge staff has developed a student-centered classroom where there *is* a defined curriculum; however, the instructor finds ways for each student to make educational progress.

For example, we have a writing unit on the interview. Class discussion first centers on the purpose of an interview and on how to formulate appropriate questions (i.e., questions that are relevant to the interviewee's expertise, and that require more than a "yes" or "no" response); students role-play mock interviews with a tutor, and then each other. At this point each student is expected to go outside the program and to interview someone who can provide information about something the student is personally interested in. Students have interviewed the head of the nursing program, a favorite teacher, an elderly relative who had never shared her life story, a Marine recruiter. Some students complete the assignment on their own; others need help setting up an appointment. Some may even need help to formulate questions and some need help in organizing and writing up the information.

Students acquire different skills as they proceed through this interview unit. The most skilled will have learned how to use resources within the community, to gather information from other people's experiences and to present this coherently in written form. The least skilled will have worked on formulating questions and on relating information from the world to the classroom. Each has made progress toward becoming a successful student.

2. *The Primacy of Spoken Language.* Teachers in Project Bridge cannot assume that students use written language either to gather information or to communicate what they have learned. Although these students are uncomfortable users of written language, their classroom talk is expressive and colorful, and reflects a wealth of life experience. They are often painfully aware of the gap between the language of everyday life and the language of academia.

Project Bridge staff stresses the use of oral language in the classroom. Important ideas are presented through talk first, and only then through reading (often oral) in class. Moreover, the staff is convinced that if information is to become understanding, the students must filter it through their own experience and express it in their own words, via discussions and journal writing. Thus listening and talking provide the base from which written language emerges.

In most classes, we use interactive dialogue journals as a link between face-to-face conversation and academic writing. An example from one student's reading journal in response to Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* says: "To be trueful it sounded like talking to some people I know and some of the words sound like me. And that Mr.—was to much for his self. And also I was glad that his wife wanted to learn to read and that her sister was determined to teach her how." As students learn to write fluently in response to ideas and text, teachers can show students written conventions such as punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing.

3. *Incorporating Minority Group Culture.* Recent research into the problems of minority underachievers shows the importance of a curriculum that incorporates the culture or language of the minority groups it is teaching (Cummins, 1986). While all students benefit from exploring minority literature and history, minority students often feel particularly engaged when introduced to historical or literary treatment which sheds light on an emotion, experience, or question. In a sociology class, for example, a unit on Migrations first asks students to interview acquaintances or family members on why they or their forebears came to California. On the basis of this information, students develop hypotheses about common motives underlying individual decisions to migrate. A series of guided questions then leads the class to examine the historical forces propelling the large scale Black migration of the 1940s or the continuing migration of Hispanic people to California.

4. *Information About the World.* Students who come to

Moreover, the staff is convinced that if information is to become understanding, the students must filter it through their own experience and express it in their own words, via discussions and journal writing.

Project Bridge frequently have scant knowledge of the world beyond their personal experiences or what they have seen on television. They often are unfamiliar with maps, have only hearsay knowledge of chromosomes and atoms, cannot explain how the branches of government function. They rarely understand how their private troubles relate to public issues.

Recognizing these needs, the Bridge staff has so far developed content classes in biology, chemistry, sociology, humanities, ethnic studies, and computer science. Inherent in these classes is the notion that reading and writing are communication skills best learned in the process of communicating genuine information and ideas—that is, content. Ideas are interesting to *all* people, *all* people have ideas, and it is these ideas which motivate them to read, write and compute in the first place.

Content courses have been developed so that they a) present significant ideas in the respective discipline, b) make those ideas accessible to students who read poorly, c) develop academic language skills, d) base the acquisition of knowledge on the students' non- academic experience, e) encourage the student to think analytically, and f) result in a student product (e.g., books of student writings, of biology experiments, of arithmetic word problems; a collage; a videotape of final reports).

Science courses incorporate hands-on activities (microscopes the first day in biology class), provide guided reading questions for many of the handouts, and teach significant scientific principles through experiments that use familiar materials and experiences (why does a cake rise?). Students are often asked to develop hypotheses about the phenomena they observe in the laboratory, and to devise experiments which will verify or challenge these. In the unit on animal behavior, for example, students work in groups of three or four. They first observe animals such as flatworms (under a dissecting microscope), garden snails, or pillbugs. They then develop questions (what makes the animal move the way it does? what makes it respond the way it does?), formulate hypotheses (it moves toward moisture, it moves away from light), and set up experiments to test these hypotheses. In looking at the results, each group makes a graph to show the data, draws its conclusions, and then presents the findings to the rest of the class. For more advanced students, these reports are written up as a scientific paper, put together in book form, and become the end product, one for each member of the class.

The same principles are followed in the humanities and social science courses. In a survey course of 20th century Afro-American literature, for example, students read poetry and prose not only as literature but also as a barometer of issues or of the mood of a historical period. The semester may begin with work on a choral reading of "We Wear the Mask" by Paul Lawrence Dunbar and "I Have Known Rivers" by Langston Hughes. The choral rendering facilitates discussion of each poet's mood and point of view. In contrasting the images and the messages of the two poems, students learn the differences between the early 1900s, considered a nadir of Afro-American history, and the post-World War I era, which gave birth to the Harlem Renaissance, the tremendous artistic flowering centered in Harlem.

Some students begin with high levels of computer anxiety; others are naturals. This initial access to the computer can open a new world.

Mathematics classes develop analytical thinking and problem solving skills, and also provide practice with basic arithmetic operations. Several curriculum units make ideas from elementary algebra and plane geometry accessible to students learning arithmetic. One such unit, for example, teaches students to plot points on a Cartesian co-ordinate plane, and to graph "rules" such as "the second number is 2 more than 3 times the first number." Ultimately students discover that such rules produce straight line graphs, and that two rules will have a "simultaneous solution" at the intersection of the two lines.

Bridge students, like all students, need access to computers. Some students begin with high levels of computer anxiety; others are naturals. This initial access to the computer can open a new world. Stuart, for example, came in reading at a fourth-grade level. When he enrolled in the Project Bridge Computer Science class, he discovered an aptitude for working with the computer and became unofficial tutor for everyone else in his class. The next semester he was hired as a tutor in the college computer lab. His improved reading and writing seem to us not unrelated to his success in this class.

These strategies reflect necessary pedagogical changes. They would not be possible, however, without certain logistical changes as well.

Program and Classroom Organization

Regular college remedial classes meet only three or four hours per week. Project Bridge meets twelve. We have found that a high intensity program which meets several hours daily lets students who often find it difficult to study at home become more deeply involved in schoolwork.

Regular college remedial classes are composed of different students in each class. The same students are together in all Bridge classes. Because teachers teach the same students, they can coordinate curriculum and relate activities. Students may read essays on school or work experiences in the reading

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class while writing them in writing class, and may discuss these essays in sociology class. They may learn the metric system in math class in order to use metric measurements in chemistry. The math instructor may read the part of Oedipus in the humanities play reading. The purpose here is twofold. We are anxious for students to understand that knowledge can be approached from many points of view and that looking at the same or similar material in different ways deepens understanding. Students also develop close ties with each other and with the staff because we spend a good deal of time together and have shared experiences and interests that transcend a particular class and become program-wide.

The effort to build community underlies much of the classroom structure. The mere fact that the same twenty-five students stay together during the program lays the groundwork for this community; activities which are simultaneously social and school related (such as a theater event or a guest speaker) and class activities (such as reading each other's work) further build these relationships. As one teacher reported, "I feel strongly there is a learning community in my classes, although I'm not sure what to use as evidence that this is the case. The atmosphere is not competitive. They work well together in collective projects, and outside of class they look out for one another—waiting for each other after class, phoning, delivering messages, papers, and projects."

A sense of community, we find, encourages support groups. For example, a group formed to study math to prepare for the entrance exam to the Licensed Vocational Nursing Program at the college. Students met outside of class time to work together, and in the weeks before the test worked as a small group during class time. Most found that working together helped them to acquire skills and encouraged them to keep studying even when they felt frustrated about their ability to master the material. When these relationships did not develop, the absence of community was sorely felt. Teachers also noted that when social friendships remained purely social, the students pulled each other out of class; when friendships became school-based as well, attendance remained good and students made good use of the program.

Tutorial support has been helpful for Bridge students. Such support allows the instructor to vary the format: small groups led by a tutor, students working in pairs or threesomes with tutors moving from group to group, individualized lessons, and whole group discussions. Often the student will participate in more than one such format in a given class session. The object here is to have students become comfortable with both familiar and unfamiliar learning situations and discourse styles.

We can expect that, in general, students enrolled in a Bridge-like program remain in school at twice the rate of other remedial students and earn better grades when they enter academic classes.

As the program has developed, we have become increasingly aware of the need for a special counselor. Our students are faced with a wide array of real-life problems: eviction notices, erratic childcare, insufficient money, health crises, abusive relationships. While the problems for adolescent students might be different in kind, they are often as serious. Such problems seriously interfere with any student's ability to focus on school tasks. A new kind of counselor needs to be assigned to the program, one whose task includes crisis counseling, and who can provide information and referral to supportive services in the community.

Finally, when students leave the support of a student- centered classroom and begin to take courses in a regular academic or vocational program, they often give up. The transition from a supportive academic community to content centered college classes may be too abrupt. We have experimented with a transitional course which provides instructional support coupled with individual and small group tutoring for students who are ready to enroll in regular classes. This course presented learning techniques such as mapping, concept journals, and test taking strategies. One of its main functions was to provide students with a chance to report successes and failures in other courses, and be assured that cheers (or groans) would be forthcoming. After one or two semesters, students recognized that they were confident and comfortable in the courses they were taking and no longer needed even this minimal support. At this point these students had become independent learners. It is ideal if such a course can be incorporated.

Evaluation

During the first semester significantly more Bridge students completed remedial units and stayed in school than contrast group students. Further, during semester two, students from Project Bridge who made the best academic use of the program completed more units with a higher grade point average than the comparable group of contrast students. We can expect that, in general, students enrolled in a Bridge-like program remain in school at twice the rate of other remedial students and earn better grades when they enter academic classes.

Wider Implications

Today, when we hear cries for student accountability, we need to insist as well that remedial programs give each student a chance that is genuine, not simply nominal. Social policies must continue to provide access to genuine education for all segments of our population and particularly for those whom education has not served well. This will be possible only if our institutions are able to offer programs that lead underprepared students to the literacy that enables them to function in academic and technical settings.

The model we have described does just that. It can be effective with students who are disengaged, those who are far behind by junior high school. Content courses, a core curriculum of basic skills that incorporate the students' diverse cultures, integrated teaching techniques, student-centered classrooms, a learning community: these principles provide a bridge for Shaughnessy's "true outsiders." Strangers to academia can get beyond the remedial waiting room, can get information, vocabulary, concepts and skills. They can function successfully in academic settings.

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NWP NEWS

The Gateway Writing Project announces two Christa McAuliffe fellows, Marilyn McWhorter of Wydown Middle School in Clayton, MO, and Jeanne Crews of Bernard Elementary School in Mehlville, MO.

Joan Krater of the Gateway Writing Project and five other secondary teachers got a Missouri Excellence grant to investigate why their suburban black students scored lower than white peers on the annual writing assessment. An error analysis of 475 papers showed that the major problem was not dialect (56% of low-scoring black writers made no errors with verb or noun endings, *be* verbs, etc.). If anything, some writers probably became weaker because a few highly-stigmatized errors had placed them in remedial classes dealing mainly with surface mechanics.

A National Writing Project data base is now being demonstrated at educational computing conferences around the country. It is part of the *Let's Share* computer-network software for schools. People can get a general introduction to the NWP (including its approach, assumptions, evidence of its success, etc.) and look up contact information for NWP sites around the U.S. and the world. The data base was prepared by Stephen Marcus, Associate Director of the South Coast Writing Project and director of its Advanced Computer Institute. *Let's Share* is produced by Russ Systems, Inc., 1344 Pacific Ave., Suite 103, Santa Cruz, CA 95060, (408) 458-5080.

Vince Wixon of the Oregon Writing Project was named Oregon teacher of the year. Wixon teaches English at Crater High School in Central Point, Oregon.

Juneau, Alaska, teacher Gail Parson, a fellow of the Alaska State Writing Consortium, was named to receive the 1988 Christa McAuliffe Fellowship sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. With her award, Parson is conducting classroom research while teaching in Project 2000, a new Juneau School District interdisciplinary program which engages students in active learning and problem solving.

A longer version of this article will appear in Community/Junior College Quarterly of Research and Practice, 13 (1).

Marlene Griffith is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project. She is currently at work on a book about community colleges. Bruce Jacobs teaches math at Laney College in Oakland, California. Smokey Wilson is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project. She teaches English at Laney College, where she also heads a program in deaf education. Margot Dashiell is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project. She teaches sociology at Laney College.

Marjorie Roemer

Literate Cultures: Multi-Voiced Classrooms

At NCTE last fall I heard J. Hillis Miller sum up the last forty years of critical activity in literary studies by saying "nothing goes without saying these days." At the same convention, Robert Scholes was quoted as having said, "The canon has exploded in our faces." Whether one chooses to see the study of literature as under siege or not, there is no escaping the sense that some things have changed. The word "problematized" may still jar some ears, but the action it names is very much with us. What constitutes a text, what texts we bring into our classrooms, what we mean by reading, what constitutes interpretation, and the means by which we make any such judgments, all have been put into question.

It seems fair to say that the literary establishment has moved significantly from readings which posited meanings inherent in texts to readings which are self-consciously *made* by readers, and made by readers who are themselves constructed by the circumstances in which they live. We have seen a shift in dynamics from textual analysis to reader response to interpretive communities. While many may be uncomfortable with the possibilities of endless instability and dismantling that the new theories unfold, there is no comfortable way to evade the issues they raise. Late twentieth century epistemology shapes us; the uncertainty principle prevails, and there is no objective, neutral way for us to know.

What is striking in all this, however, is the extent to which classrooms remain the same. The structures in which we live and work go on, only slightly, if at all, modified by the theories we espouse. Eighteen-year- olds leave the domination of their parents' homes to come under our domination. Professors lecture about deconstruction in classrooms as clearly marked by power and authority as ever.

But how could we teach the destabilized approaches of our discipline? What would be a pedagogy true to our current sense of what it means to know? Surely it cannot be a classroom where one person lectures and the rest transcribe and repeat "the truth." (I do not mean to suggest here that there is nothing to be taught, or even that there is nothing that can be transmitted through a lecture. People can be *told* useful things about the state of scholarship, but if that is the whole of their education, students cannot easily learn what it means to enact transactions with the texts they encounter and what it means to make these transactions the subject of their study. And it is this education that seems central to me—self-reflexivity may be one name for it—promoting an awareness of our own thought processes, the conflicts they entail and the means of transcendence they imply.)

Shoshana Felman dealt with the problem I pose some time ago in her celebrated essay on "Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable" (1982). Taking Socrates as the first model, she says, "every pedagogy stems from its confrontation with the impossibility of teaching" (p.24). She describes a situation in which teaching teaches only in so far as it subverts itself, blurs the distinctions between teacher and student, turns teaching into learning. Focusing her attention on Lacan's response to Freud, she says: "teaching, like analysis, has not so much to do with lack of knowledge as with *resistances* to knowledge" (p.30).

My interest is in making these *resistances* the focal point of the classroom. (*College English* recently devoted attention to this subject. The term resistance is, of course, a technical reference to psychoanalytic theory, alluding to the defenses that inhibit the bringing to consciousness of unconscious desires; however, by extension, resistance comes to refer to all the ways in which interpretation is always a process of "working through" defenses of one kind and another.) Last summer I had a very special opportunity to focus on the issue of resistance; I coordinated the Literature Institute for Teachers, an NEH seminar directed by Sheridan Blau (with Angus Dunstan, associate director), held at UC Santa Barbara. The Institute brought together twenty-four past Fellows of the SouthCoast Writing Project to see what it would mean to apply the insights of the National Writing Project to the study of literature.

Writing Project Fellows are used to collaborative learning groups, to attentiveness to process, and to writing on every possible occasion. These three commitments made possible some powerful revelations for a group of already highly experienced teachers. For virtually all of us, the experience

of reading together for five weeks changed our history as readers and as teachers.

What did we learn? We learned a lot about how very competitive reading has always been for us, how much our past history in literary studies has been what Blau names "rivalry for the same discursive space," that is, a competition to win the general appropriation or ownership of the text on our own terms. While we were all very familiar and comfortable with the supportive writing groups of the Writing Project, when we began to discuss literary texts in such groups we found it much easier to contest than to support. Writing groups traditionally learn how to respect each group member/author's ownership of his or her text and also learn to own their audience responses as valid but not exclusive. When, however, the author is Milton and the text is *Paradise Lost*, the question of authority becomes encrusted with several layers of additional complexity. Authorial intent, historical reference, religious dogma, all take on powers and must be adjudicated. Our critical traditions for dealing with published, and especially canonical texts, were all about contest, strong readings driving out weak ones. In the presence of a literary text, authority was not so easily shared. In such circumstances, doubts and stammerings are not easily shared either. People don't often think aloud; instead, they insist and seek to persuade. The tentative, the intuitive, the half-heard, are all quickly repressed.

Our summer's activity was, then, the uncovering of a classroom dynamic that our past experience with textual study had fostered, a dynamic of power and authority in texts and in experts, a search for right answers and approval, and a radical skepticism and distrust of "other" interpretations. It took all our skills and experience to begin to overcome the habits of the authoritarian classroom and authoritarian reading. Our work was to validate resistance, to make our doubts as important as our certainties.

One of the things we did was to slow down the pace, to let the words of the text linger in the room longer. We read aloud; we did all sorts of "text rendering," calling out our favorite lines—letting the words resound and gather meanings. We did "reader's theater" (where dramatized reading of the different voices in a text brought the work to life), "persona paraphrase" (where we re-spoke the voices in different idioms and registers), "pointing" to favorite lines and problem lines—anything that gave the text presence among us and that delayed the closure of a single reading.

But how could we teach the destabilized approaches of our discipline? What would be a pedagogy true to our current sense of what it means to know?

We wrote about associations and confusions, about misreading and revised readings. And all these acts were appropriations of some sort, ways of making the text ours, or of making friends with it, understanding it on our terms and also on other terms, through other people's understandings.

This is exactly the sort of thing one can't lecture about—perhaps one can only bear witness—because what I am speaking about is experience, not something that can, in fact, be transcribed, only something that can be alluded to and then reanimated through apprehension. In the same way, literature itself is an allusion to experience, reanimated through the transactions of its readers. The experience of this Institute reaffirmed for me the real significance of studying in groups. Sharing the ways we make meanings seems to me the most essential knowledge that a culture can transmit. Perhaps Michael Oakeshott put it most clearly, over twenty years ago, when he said that human beings are distinguished from other animals by their ability to participate in unending conversations. "Education, properly speaking, is an initiation into the skill and partnership of this conversation in which we learn to recognize the voices, to distinguish the proper occasions of utterance, and in which we acquire the intellectual and moral habits appropriate to conversation" (as quoted by Bruffee, 1984).

If reflective thought is, indeed, the internalization of social conversation (see Vygotsky, 1934), then classrooms would do well to make real exchange their central activity. Of course, this is never easy. Teachers give the grades and the weight of that privilege alone makes any kind of equality a fiction. Nonetheless, much can be done to change the dynamic of the classroom from what Freire calls the "banking concept"—the teacher deposits the content—to a model of the group researching its own responses in an effort to refine, control, and understand these responses.

There are many models among us now of pedagogies that represent alternatives to lecturing. Bob Probst has developed very detailed strategies for making the transaction individual readers hold with texts both visible and shared. In his work, the exchange of a rich range of effective and associative responses opens new access to works. Thomas Newkirk, in an article called "Looking for Trouble: A Way to Unmask Our Readings" (1984), has made the problems we have in confronting a poem the basis for our understanding of that poem. He allows readers to see how their own readings enact a recursive process of revision and redefinition, amending interpretations as they proceed. Recently Kathleen McCormick, Gary Waller, and Lois Fowler in the *Lexington Introduction to Literature* have pointed toward ways to offer readers both independence and cultural awareness. They suggest that both readers and texts bring with them reper-

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Literate Cultures: Multi-Voiced Classrooms

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toires and that our task is to consciously examine these repertoires and the ideologies on which they rest. Nancie Atwell has, most strikingly, made collaboration her subject: "When my kids and I enter language together, collaborate as theorists, and act on those theories in the classroom, we forge and inhabit a common ground where the logic of their learning and my teaching can finally converge and become one" (1987, p.22).

In my own classes I have tried to make interpretive acts the central subject of study. I have often begun classes with a text like John Berger's *Another Way of Telling*, directing students' attention at once to the "readings" we perform even in so simple an act as the recognition of an event depicted in a photograph. For instance, students who identify the assembly line worker with raised arms as celebrating the liberation of a Friday afternoon and the coming weekend reveal a host of cultural assumptions about work and workers, gesture, attitude, picture taking, and social behavior.

The book includes nine short pieces, essays with photographs, that deal with the uses of photographs and variant responses to them; a longer, more theoretical essay which raises questions about the meaning of appearances, languages, and codes; and then, finally, a sequence of a hundred and fifty photographs without words. This section embodies the premise of the title, "another way of telling," a story without a story-line.

In studying this text, the possibility of a single valid reading of the photograph is eroded. The whole book is testament to the multiplicity of interpretive acts possible with the same materials. The extended photographic essay demands a reading that draws the reader in to make connections, to fill in the gaps that constitute this story: the small child might be this woman when she was young; the young man might be someone she once cared for; the recurrent idealized figure of a woman bathing might be an image from her dreams. In "reading" this way, students begin to see how much their own readings are always a projection of their own histories and how different our readings are, one from another.

Here is one example of how such a class operates: After looking at this set of one hundred and fifty photographs, students are asked to write a paragraph exploring what sense they make of the sequence—what responses they have. Some write about the brutality portrayed, the pervasive slaughter of animals. Others write about the recurring religious imagery. Others, about the references to stitchery, to knitting and sewing that seem to weave in and out of the text. Then students are asked to exchange paragraphs and to write a single sentence summing up their partner's remarks, or to extract one most significant line from their partner's paragraph. Finally, the class, in a circle, reads aloud the sentences composed. The impact of this communal response is dramatic, at once unified and individual, an experience shared but personal.

My dissatisfaction with the lecture as a dominant mode of instruction is that it doesn't dramatize the constructed, mediated process of interpretation ... doesn't remind students that our world is made by people and can be remade.

To open a literature course with such an experience is to say that individuals have power and that groups can extend that power. It is to put one's emphasis on what people can make of the world around them and the texts they encounter; and it is to celebrate difference.

My dissatisfaction with the lecture as a dominant mode of instruction is that it doesn't dramatize the constructed, mediated process of interpretation and therefore doesn't remind students that our world is made by people and can be remade. In its very form, the lecture urges acquiescence and homogeneity. This is where I find so much of the new reform movement (otherwise known as the old back to basics movement) so curiously confused. For instance, the NEH document on the state of the humanities in the nation's public schools that was recently prepared for the U.S. Congress, Lynne Cheney's report "American Memory," somehow pits process against knowledge, as though knowledge were uncontested fact. The report is an indictment of cultural illiteracy; it makes a strong argument for education as the transmission of historical consciousness. It says that if we are to understand the present, we must understand the past; we must ask: "What does it mean that Rome fell? And Athens? What does it mean for us?" (1987, p.6). Who could disagree? But the report insists on making instruction in process the villain of the piece, the cause of our failure to transmit the legacy of culture, as though these questions themselves were not, indeed, process questions, as though only one answer were possible and that answer might be internalized through memorization. If we follow the formulations of Jim Merod in his new book, *The Political Responsibility of the Critic* (1987), and think of texts themselves as strategies for dealing with cultural conflict and our readings of texts as strategies as well, then we are inescapably led to see that it is these strategies, these transformative possibilities, that constitute a cultural heritage.

The students that I meet invariably appear to have been subject to an education that has made them distrustful, even disdainful, of their own faculties. They expect to be told what things mean, and they have little experience in noticing their own thought processes. They don't notice what conclusions they jump to—how they automatically fill in the gaps a text provides. Only when they begin to notice how they read can they begin to hold that process up to scrutiny and revise it or consider alternatives. When a whole roomful of people begins to share and reflect on its reading practices, then we can begin a dialogue that broadens the possibilities for all of us. The single-voiced classroom of a lecturer, even a brilliant one, doesn't allow that discursive space.

In a time that celebrates the "dialogized" voice, plurality, heterogeneity, and the subtle interplay of what is spoken and what is repressed, in texts as well as in cultures, it seems odd that the monolithic control of the lecturer should remain so much intact; but powerful institutions don't change easily, and neither we nor our students can easily change the expectations we bring into the classroom. However, if we do, indeed, teach cultural literacy, it is in the examination of discursive practices, not merely in the memorization of authorized vocabulary lists.

Finally, I would like to quote James Wright, who wrote in a letter to Leslie Silko how often he thought of her work "...when I'm in my office and pondering what I'm going to say to my students this afternoon and how I'm going to try to listen to them..." (1986, p.21). How we listen to students and how they come to hear themselves and one another seem an essential part of any kind of literacy.

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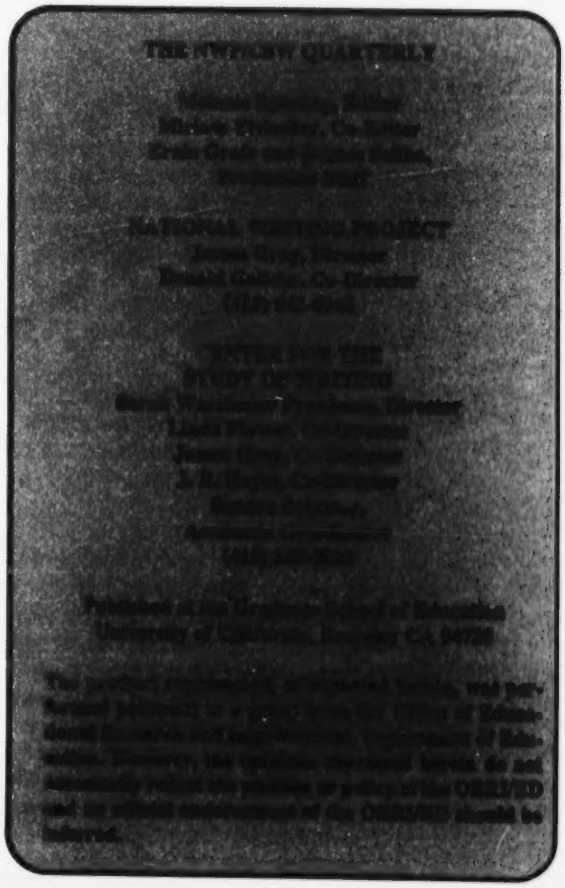
Marjorie Roemer is an assistant professor of English at the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, and a Teacher Consultant with the SouthCoast Writing Project in Santa Barbara, California.



The National Writing Project wishes to acknowledge Apple Computer's Educator Training Program for its gift of six MacIntosh computers and a laser printer. This gift will help support NWP publications activity.

CSW RESEARCHER PRESENTATIONS AT AERA

The American Educational Research Association will hold its annual convention March 27-31 in San Francisco. Following is a schedule of CSW's participation in this conference.

Monday, March 27
6:15-7:45 p.m.: Computer Support for Reading and Writing: Research Findings and Issues
John R. Hayes, Discussant

Tuesday, March 28
12:15-1:55 p.m.: Writing and the Computer
David Wallace and **Charles Hill**, "Understanding On-Line Composition: Applying a Cognitive Model of Revision to Word Processing"
6:15-7:45 p.m.: Writing as a Social Act
Anne Haas Dyson, "Play, Pictures and Pencils in the Primary School: the Development of Dialectic between Form and Function"
Sarah Warshauer Freedman, "A Growing Sense of Audience for Middle School Writers: U.S. Students Exchange Writing with U.K. Students"

Wednesday, March 29
2:15-3:45 p.m.: Classroom Practices
Linda Flower and **Barbara Sitko**, "Strategic Awareness in Writing: A Study of Metacognition as a Student-Controlled Tool for Learning"
Barbara Sitko, "How Writers Use 'Real Audience' Feedback: Problem-Solving in Revision"
6:15-8:15 p.m.: Theory, Research and Pedagogy in Literacy: Interpretations and Controversies
John R. Hayes, Chair
Karen A. Schriver, "Interpretations of Theory in Literacy Studies"

Thursday, March 30
10:35-12:05 a.m.: Knowledge, Knowledge Change and Writing
John Ackerman, "Plotting a Cause Through the Intertext: How Writers' Prior Knowledge Affects Discourse Synthesis"
Nancy Spivey and **Stuart Greene**, "Aufgabe in Writing and Learning from Sources"

LOUISE ROSENBLATT SPEAKS AT CSW SEMINAR

On October 10, Louise Rosenblatt spoke to the Center seminar on the topic, "The Writer's Stance." In her presentation, Rosenblatt extended to writing points she has made so eloquently in the past about reading. Just as there is no such thing as a generic reader, she said, there is no such thing as a generic writer; rather, there are specific writers at specific times working under specific circumstances for specific purposes. As with reading, writing encompasses a transaction, which is to say, meaning happens not in words but in the relationship between people and words as that relationship is shaped by context. Writers are constantly pulling out of their reservoir those words that they think readers will have had similar experiences with and can therefore share. In the classroom, we need to create writing situations that connect up to that reservoir and that allow students to learn to balance the public and private aspects of sense that feed their writing. For a detailed discussion of this topic, see Rosenblatt's *Writing and Reading: The Transactional Theory*, CSW Technical Report No. 13, available through CSW, School of Education, Tolman Hall, Univ. of California, Berkeley, 94720.

4:05-5:35 p.m.: Text Features
Ann M. Penrose, Chair
Mary Sue Ammon and **Paul Ammon**, "Text Features Associated with Writing and Reasoning about Science"

6:15-7:45 p.m.: Writing Special Interest Group Business Meeting
Glynda Hull, Chair

Friday, March 31
8:45-10:15 a.m.: Studies of Orality and Literacy: Critical Issues for the Practice of Schooling
Wallace Chafe, "Information Flow in Spoken and Written Language"
8:45-10:15 a.m.: Knowledge and Writing: Four Perspectives
Victoria Stein, Chair

In conjunction with the Special Interest Groups in Writing and in Language Development, CSW is planning a reception during AERA. For details, call or write the Center for the Study of Writing, School of Education, University of California, Berkeley, California 94720; (415) 643-7022.

NWP REPORT

Despite the Heat: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in Athens

from Wendy Strachan

The American Community School of Athens (ACS) has, for the past three summers, hosted a summer program for teachers K-12: "Language and Learning Across the Curriculum: Writing to Learn/Learning to Write." Originally the program was planned as an intensive experience for ACS teachers who had participated in Writing Project inservice sessions during the year. For the past two years, however, it has been open to teachers from other schools in Athens and in the Middle East. Although most come from international schools and are thus oriented to American curriculum and views of teaching, a few teachers from Greek private schools and colleges have joined the group of approximately twenty-five participants. The Greek teachers bring different perspectives, educational backgrounds, and teaching experience to the work of the group. They work in a different language and in a different educational system and cultural context. Thus, we are eager to learn what they find appropriate for their students and what effects their use of new methods has, both on their students' writing and on classroom interactions. We have begun to find out from what the teachers themselves report. In what follows here, I share some of the reactions and insights that seemed particularly interesting.

But first, a little context. Classes and class loads in Greek schools tend to be large; one of the teachers reported having approximately 300 students and seven classes, grades 9-12. Teachers are expected to do all preparation and marking outside of school time. Learning at all levels depends largely on memorization and factual recall of what the teacher has presented. The onus is on the student to succeed. At the high school level particularly students feel intense pressure from both school and parents to spend many hours on homework and to perform well. The curriculum, which is determined by the Education Ministry, is very full in content—overfull, some would say—time is at a premium, and teaching is oriented to external examinations. Reading material is restricted, not simply because of availability but, according to a Greek history teacher, as a matter of policy. Students may not check out magazines from the library, for instance, nor may teachers bring in journals or magazines of their choice. The physical, logistical, and pedagogical constraints which are put upon teachers appear to exceed by quite a wide margin those experienced by most teachers in overseas schools and thus most of our participants.

Greek students, however, seem to suffer from the same problems as students everywhere. Two EFL teachers from a private Greek school were prompted to join the summer course because their students struggle with writing compositions in exams and they wanted ideas on how to help them. The composition section on the exam is "the dreaded one," they said. Students cannot generate, organize, and develop their ideas efficiently or well enough. A director of a Greek journalism school was discouraged by his students' attitudes toward writing. He says the students assume they know how to write and have nothing to learn and consequently that they need neither practice nor instruction. Yet, he comments, "They don't evaluate their ideas and don't identify the important and unimportant ideas." A high school teacher of Greek literature sees her students' main problem as the inability to organize their thoughts when called on to explain what they know in writing. "I find it tremendously difficult to teach young minds to think. Most students are somewhat 'lost'. . . ."

Although set within different teaching contexts, such concerns and problems are ones we all recognize and share. To address them, the Greek teachers, as participants in the workshop, were of course presented with the same teaching models and strategies as everyone else. The course, following the Writing Project model, is run as a collaborative teachers' workshop. It blends theory and practice about teaching and learning, and about the nature of writing, as both a psychological and social process. Teachers' experience, presentations, and reflective responses contribute to the content of the course, and thus traditional patterns of authority in the room are subverted. Both the contexts for learning and the content of the program are recommended as alternatives for teachers in their own classrooms.

The Greek teachers have themselves reported on how the teaching strategies were received by their students and how the learning contexts were affected. As part of the course credit requirement, each teacher during the fall term classroom-tests some of the strategies worked through during the summer and documents both her own and her students' responses. Clio Castroyannis is a curriculum coordinator at her school. She had a choice of classes to teach and experiment with. She chose a class of twenty-two fifteen-year-old high school students who were preparing to sit the Cambridge English Proficiency exam. Early in the year she wrote along with the students and reports sharing one of her pieces. For her, it was "an unforgettable experience." The students were both impressed and pleased to hear what she had written and she felt that the sharing created a new tone to the class and an "atmosphere of trust."

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The following excerpts are from her own description of her experience:

Most of the students are not very confident writers. When I asked them about their writing, they said things like:

"I'm not a good writer. Most times when they give me a topic I feel afraid. Nothing comes to my mind. I have to think a lot in order to get ideas."

"I think that if you haven't got a talent in writing (and I don't think I have), you could never be a writer."

When we came to the phase of revision, the students' eagerness to revise their writing was amazing. Some of them even tried four drafts—quite unusual for Greek students so pressured for time. In their learning logs they wrote:

"My revising process was quite a difficult thing. First of all I had to give much more details in order to clear up some vague points of my first draft. In addition to that I had to use more complex sentences and a richer vocabulary. But the most important was that I had to analyze my feelings and reactions and organize the whole material in a different way."

"Revising is very useful and I wish we had the time at the exams to do it. . . . It would help me a lot and I think I would be able to show them what I can really do, as this can't be shown from the first draft."

I was very impressed that some students used the writing process in their Greek classes. I intend to stress that fact very much in my inservice session. The Greek teacher was puzzled but very pleased with the revised work.

"The revision helped me also at Greek compositions: we wrote our first today and the first thing I did was a free writing. I wrote everything that came to my mind and then put them in order. I saw the others having written two lines and my page was full."

I was also extremely impressed with the fact that they kept to the deadline. We usually have great difficulty collecting homework.

Clio saw clearly what the students were able to do once she gave them the opportunity and taught them some strategies. Their ability to generate, organize, and develop their ideas confirmed the value of her efforts. The students gained confidence and saw themselves as able to learn to write. That the students effectively transferred the techniques they had learned to their writing in Greek was a further confirmation.

Anna Krinis's experience was similar to Clio's. Working with a group of ninth graders, an advanced English as a Second Language class, Anna developed plans for teaching the writing of narrative. She included mini-lessons on the strategies she had learned during the summer. When she began teaching them, she felt she was simply following a formula in rote fashion. However, her intuitive sense, derived from her own writing experience, and her willingness to experiment were validated. She writes: "During these mini-lessons I felt as if I was learning with the students—the strategies were becoming clearer to me. I finally felt as if I was understanding them myself. We were all learning."

Anna's students, like Clio's, became conscious of the ways in which they could develop their writing. One student described a "show and tell" strategy:

It's something a writer has to do to make a film out of his book. It's amazing how it works; it makes the whole description or story so much better and besides it enlarges your vocabulary since you can't use the same word over and over again.

The same student wrote at the end of the narrative writing project:

I now have a picture of how to write and not just plain instructions. . . . I feel like a writer—searching, rewriting, adding, leaving out parts, erasing until exactly what I want to say is on paper. It was like walking into a labyrinth of words and finally choosing a way out—my first "book," my own little success.

Although these latter examples are from highly successful and articulate students, they nonetheless show what can happen when a teacher both encourages and demonstrates a process of thinking and writing. From the single applications described, we cannot assume other changes in the classroom learning environment. Nevertheless, the first conceptual leap has been taken and reflected in classroom practice. For us, what both teachers reported showed that the strategies produce results similar to those reported by teachers in other Writing Projects, despite very different cultural and linguistic contexts. The similarities attest to the theoretical soundness and teachability of such strategies and further to the effectiveness of the Bay Area Writing Project model of professional development. We look forward now to hearing from the Greek teachers who participated in this past summer's program—one of them from Clio's school. What did they find useful—despite the heat. . . ?

Wendy Strachan is the Director of the Athens Writing Project, Athens, Greece.

Books

John R. Maitino

SHARING WRITING: PEER RESPONSE GROUPS IN ENGLISH CLASSES
by Karen Spear
Heinemann Boynton/Cook

Students in our English classes sometimes seem to provide the most compelling evidence against using small groups for discussion and revision work. They lack maturity, they share little interest in writing, they seem unable to read professional and student texts analytically, and they appear to lack the background for working collaboratively with peers. Groups involved in revision work may wander aimlessly through a student essay, engaging in a kind of hit and miss editorial exercise without ever addressing the genuine needs of the text and its writer. At best, as James Moffett says, young writers may be able to identify writing problems, but since they often cannot understand the underlying causes, they have great difficulty in offering solutions for those problems. In addition, we may as English teachers instinctively dismiss group or collaborative work because we were taught in traditional, teacher-centered classrooms and find the experience somewhat alien.

With *Sharing Writing*, however, Karen Spear provides an extended theoretical discussion of peer response groups and a wealth of practical applications for teachers who are either skeptical about using such groups or seek informed guidance about teaching writing through group interaction. Her particular audience, secondary and higher education writing teachers, will find in Part I ("Challenges of Peer Response Groups") a realistic and fair-minded analysis of the benefits and difficulties of sharing writing in groups. On the basis of transcripts, interviews and her own observations of secondary and college students, Spear identifies five fundamental problems with collaborative groups. Grounding her discussion in the problems of classroom experience, she asks us to see and understand the "actual dynamics of such groups, discouraging as they sometimes can be," so we may structure groups for more effective interaction and writing. Chapters include discussions of related topics—connections between the composing process and the interpersonal process, problems in sharing writing, the actual reading of drafts, revision of drafts in groups, and moving from teacher-centered to peer-collaborative roles.

Teachers may find Part II ("Developing Peer Response Groups") more practical and more helpful than the earlier section because Spear provides so many examples, models, and suggestions, which have immediate classroom application. We see successful groups in operation (through transcripts with Spear's helpful commentary), we observe a peer-centered class from its inception (the sequence of steps, assignments, and Spear's many valuable suggestions), and we may sharpen our understanding of how we can strengthen students' skills fundamental to writing and group work: *reading* peer texts constructively, *listening* as a writer and reader, and giving effective *feedback*.

In what follows, I want to discuss Spear's book from two vantage points: as it helps writing teachers conceive (or reconceive!) the art of teaching as a collaborative process, and as it aids teachers in structuring their classes so students will encounter writing as a "lively communal activity" (Spear's words) where the sharing of experiences, feelings, and ideas becomes itself a rewarding undertaking.

Spear identifies three assumptions about writing and group work, stated in the preface, which help us to see the rewards of collaborative teaching. She suggests that composing is an interpersonal process, that student problems in writing and group interaction parallel one another, and that when students learn at the same time to write and participate in groups, writing and learning become more closely associated with exploration and discovery in a dynamic

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sense. Much of the first chapter links the composing and interpersonal processes in an analytical and descriptive fashion. We see relationships between writer and audience, and the excitement engendered by learning to write and interact in groups.

I found most convincing Spear's commentary on part of a transcript of a successful group revision session coming at the end of Part I. A student writer, Carol, has begun to realize how she can, with the help of her group, project herself into the audience's perspective and see her writing as they see it. Spear's comments crystallize the value of response groups as a teaching strategy:

"Once this awareness sinks in, students become more likely to compose alternative constructions aloud, using the group as a sounding board. Unlike composing sentences in private, oral composition in groups seems to capitalize on the writer's projected self as she hears her words the way her audience does. Even if peer feedback is minimal or poor, the projected self seems to provide some of its own feedback; one hears not just as oneself but in another, enlarged role" (p. 66).

In other words, peer groups help student writers to be self-conscious, reflective and critical about their writing in the same way that public speakers can often "read" their audience's responses as they speak, staying on course, modifying, as the situation dictates. Sharing writing allows students, as Spear says, to rehearse ideas and written constructions before putting them into a final form.

Spear's book also helps us to realize that while collaborative learning offers certain advantages, teachers must first understand the problems they will encounter with response groups. She lists five interrelated problems, promising to treat them as themes throughout the book. They include: confused expectations about the group's purpose and the individual's role in it; inability to read group members' texts analytically; misunderstanding about the process of writing and revision; the failure to work collaboratively with group members; and the failure to monitor and maintain group activity.

Chapter 2 provides a transcript of an unsuccessful revision session along with Spear's occasional commentary about specific problems we see in the transcript. Many of the problems are strikingly familiar, and made more so by the typical language, colloquialisms, and hesitations of these lower division college students. They show ambivalence about criticizing one another ("feel free to cut me to ribbons"), they cannot ask concrete questions, they cannot focus the group's concerns, and they tend to wander aimlessly from point to point.

Spear's commentary and subsequent discussions provide specific strategies for remedying these problems through instruction, modeling, and other suggestions. She focuses on reading peer drafts in Chapter 3 (her discussion places reading in context, but seems sometimes to emphasize the theoretical at the expense of practical application), revision in Chapter 4 (with fine suggestions about helping readers make one-sentence statements of the main idea as they perceive it), and role redefinitions in Chapter 5 (helping students in groups to move from acting as "teacher surrogates" to "peer collaborators"). In addition, Chapter 5 presents two partial transcripts of successful group sessions in which students demonstrate a focused use of peers in brainstorming and reinforcing the notion of audience. Coming after examples of unsuccessful group revision work, Spear's edited transcripts help us appreciate the possibilities of collaborative teaching.

If Part I lays the groundwork for understanding the dynamics of group interaction, Spear provides in Part II strategies for instituting and maintaining peer response groups in our classes. Her strategies do not provide a systematic program; rather, they present guidelines for those interested in using peer response groups in writing classes: introducing a peer-centered class; activities and lessons for the first several weeks; monitoring groups and dealing with failures in group work; and teaching skills vital to the success of response groups.

Many of the traits of successful revision groups emerge in a long transcript accompanied by Spear's commentary in Chapter 6, and bear repeating. For example, the

group probes for a clear statement of the writer's goals; when they discover that statement, they think through the piece with the writer, consistently sticking with the topic; they ground their comments and criticisms in their own readings and reactions, giving the writer repeated opportunities to rethink her text in light of audience response.

Since Spear's students include upper division English education majors, secondary teachers may rightfully desire an example of successful group work among average high school students. None is present, and many of her suggestions for peer groups are made in the context of university courses. Nevertheless, the traits and subsequent guidelines provide a flexible outline secondary teachers might adapt for their own students. For example, teaching response groups to examine a text for a clear statement seems vital in any writing class, and Spear's later suggestion that students compose, in groups, a single main idea for a data-based essay has application for all students.

When I read Spear's descriptions of how she begins her freshmen writing classes (Chapter 6), I found it easy to imagine how her students may begin to experience writing as a lively communal activity. They share their writing during the first session; they get to know one another quickly (she describes a "name chain" activity [p. 153] in a catalog of group activities which serves as the final chapter); they interview a fellow student and write a sketch which is published by the end of the first week as a classroom handout; and they experience group members as important resources in producing their own writing. Interestingly, she avoids evaluation of these early writing sketches, asking students instead to discuss "how" they composed their texts. (Process is emphasized, and students begin early to develop expectations about their classroom as a community where sharing is a vital activity.)

Early assignments—a data-based assignment using Spear's data only, for example—present low-risk writing during which students work in groups discussing and evaluating information, while in later draft and revision sessions they benefit from worksheets and focused questions (pp. 92-94).

Other suggestions which enliven writing include the way in which Spear as teacher shares her authority by enlisting students' suggestions and feedback, and her readiness to involve herself in the day-to-day problems of groups. My own experience with groups confirms the importance of her suggestions. When I present activities as experiments, explaining my goals and asking later for evaluation, students slowly begin to think about their own learning and about the processes we employ in our daily work. Spear's advice about maintaining peer response groups deserves quotation and comment:

"Thus, the teacher's most effective stance in maintaining collaborative writing classes is to confront group behavior openly, to anticipate the problems students are likely to have, and to recognize them as a natural part of the process. Most of all, teachers shouldn't be embarrassed or defensive when calling attention to students' performance, but should couch their criticism in the context of continued encouragement, understanding, and growth" (p. 99).

As I read these words, they reminded me of a J. D. Salinger quote which seems out of date today, at least in classrooms where the excitement of collaborative learning permeates the air. "You don't have to think too hard when you talk to a teacher," Salinger wrote, probably imagining the classroom in which teaching often meant lectures, notes, and questions which rarely, if ever, asked for personal reflection. In Spear's classroom and in many classrooms today, teachers must constantly assess individual and group learning, the problems of interpersonal dynamics, monitoring and shaping the kinds of discourse in which students engage—all tasks which demand engagement with students on a personal as well as an intellectual level. In such surroundings, the promise of genuine engagement with other human beings and of real learning demand active thinking of teachers and of their students.

Part of making writing a lively communal activity involves, of course, the dynamics of interpersonal communication. Spear's final chapters offer sugges-

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tions for the improvement of reading, listening, and giving feedback as these skills may improve group interaction. Though teachers may be tempted to treat such activities mechanically, as skill building exercises only, many of them can serve to sensitize students to the art of communication—how and what we hear, how we present ourselves and how we are perceived. Chapter 9 ("Listening: The Foundation for Sharing"), for example, lists the research findings on good listening, and provides guided activities in which groups can apply those findings to their own behavior. Spear divides listening skills into four dimensions—attending, reflection, drawing out, and connecting—and offers activities for each dimension. In one exercise designed to improve attending, students are given a controversial topic and asked to summarize the previous speaker's position before explaining their own views. The notes at the end of these chapters (and many other chapters) provide additional resources teachers may wish to use for activities and ideas.

Although Spear concludes her book with a helpful miscellany of suggestions for group work (establishing groups, self-disclosure, movement exercises, modeling, maintaining groups, collaborative problem solving, and recording peer input), she might have provided a more satisfying conclusion by including a student's work in stages along with commentary and brief transcripts. A first draft, revisions, abbreviated transcripts disclosing peer group discussions of drafts or parts of them, commentary, and a final draft—these might have helped us to envision the actual process of sharing writing, and the fruits of that sharing.

Nevertheless, Karen Spear's *Sharing Writing* provides a well-thought-out framework for understanding the role of peer response groups in the writing class. Her transcripts and commentary bring to life the problems and possibilities of collaborative teaching, capturing the sometimes aimless exchanges of response groups as well as the rewarding moments of student discovery and self-reflection. Her delineation of the problems of group work, so fully documented in her transcripts and commentary, lays the groundwork for instituting many of her later ideas and suggestions in a writing class. And, perhaps most importantly, Spear's book helps us to envision our classes as communities in which it is not what we give, but what we share that enriches each of us, teacher and student alike, and helps us to achieve our fullest potential.

John Maitino teaches English at California State Polytechnic University in Pomona, California, where he also directs the English Education Program.

Chris Anderson

EMBRACING CONTRARIES
by Peter Elbow
Oxford University Press

Peter Elbow's important new book, *Embracing Contraries*, consists of twelve essays on cognitive development and pedagogical theory organized under four main headings: "The Learning Process," "The Teaching Process," "The Evaluation Process," and "Contraries and Inquiry." All but the last essay and an extended excerpt from a peer observation journal have been published previously. Omitted is any work directly about writing or the teaching of writing (on the assumption apparently that this is already widely available in *Writing Without Teachers* and *Writing With Power*), though much of the theorizing here has obvious implications for composition practice, forming the theoretical basis for Elbow's well-known teaching on freewriting, writing groups, and the notion of power or voice in prose.

What compels me about this collection, first, is the "power" and "voice" of Elbow's own style, his capacity to practice as a writer what he preaches as a writing teacher. *Embracing Contraries* is a good read in a way that few books about writing ever are. Part of the reason for this is that Elbow is instinctively autobiographical, grounding his observations in who he is as a writer and teacher and dramatizing the processes of his thinking as he works through the implications of his experience. Each essay in the collection is prefaced by a short passage describing the origins of the ideas, the places and scenes and times of the piece in Elbow's teaching career, so that in the end we have a real sense

of Elbow as a person, a mind in the act of knowing. Within each essay the autobiographical impulse shows as well, particularly in Elbow's willingness to admit his own biases and enthusiasms and in his use of his own contexts—at MIT or Bard or Evergreen—as representative anecedotes for the larger concerns of the profession. The result is a movie of Elbow's mind, a narrative with the appeal of any good narrative: concreteness, a developing plot, an engaging ethos.

The other source of the book's power stylistically is Elbow's freedom from jargon and his capacity to say things directly and simply that most of us don't have the courage or brazenness to just come out and say. Of all the people writing in our profession, only Elbow could be the author of sentences like: "I simply tried to imitate the good teachers I'd had—to be Socrates and a good guy at the same time"; "The one sure thing is that teaching is sexual"; "Much teaching behavior really stems from an unwarranted fear of things falling apart."

And of course, in this way the form of Embracing Contraries acts out Elbow's emphasis as a theorist on induction, metaphor, and the contemplation of the concrete as the most useful methods of knowing ("Nondisciplinary Courses and the Two Roots of Real Learning"), as well as his belief in the conceptual validity of narrative and descriptive exploratory writing ("Teaching Two Kinds of Thinking by Teaching Writing").

The second reason that I admire *Embracing Contraries* is that so much of what Elbow says in it rings true. James Berlin and others have recently criticized Elbow for being politically and epistemologically naive about the notion of the "self," a notion that in their view has been deconstructed or made problematic by postmodern literary and rhetorical theory (see Berlin's "Rhetoric and Ideology," for example, in the September 1988 *College English*). Elbow has become one of the favorite whipping boys or scapegoats of contemporary theorists. But however valid these deconstructions may be—and I think we should take them seriously, because they have terribly important practical consequences—reading Elbow you find observation after observation that just rings true, that just seems right. I mean two things here: first, that his observations seem true psychologically, are insightful about what it feels like to be a writer and teacher. I know of nothing more reassuring, therapeutic, more intuitively sound, than Elbow's famous distinction between the critic and the creator in the writing process and the importance of postponing the critic. That just makes sense to me as a writer myself—it makes my students and my student teachers nod, respond, agree more than any other statement I report from the world of writing theory. In the same way I know of nothing more sound or liberating, more healthy, for teachers than Elbow's contention that we need to be both coaches and critics with students, embracing both poles of that contrary. Years of frustration and anxiety seem to get clarified in that notion, if only because it "validates that sense of frustration and confusion," acknowledges it as an "accurate and valid response to the complexities of the task at hand." There is that shock of recognition when you come across this notion, the gestalt-switch sensation of the stairs that seemed to go down suddenly going up, the old woman becoming the duck.

When I say that the book "rings true" I also mean that there's much in it that you can actually go out and do—practical, workable techniques for students, teachers, administrators to apply right now: freewriting itself, but also a number of approaches to the problems of evaluating papers, classes, faculty, and whole programs ("Trying to Teach While Thinking About the End," "Evaluating Students More Accurately," "Collaborative Peer Evaluation by Faculty," "Trustworthiness in Dialectic"). Many of us already know that freewriting actually works, however the "self" it seems to liberate is constructed, wherever it comes from, whether it exists at all. *Embracing Contraries* is full of such practical ideas, described step by step, illustrated, made accessible.

My third reason for liking this book so much is its complexity. I've been partly going along with the implication that Elbow is naive in his explanation for why his techniques work, but I think that in the end that isn't true. Elbow is too concerned with contraries to be

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naive. He is too self-aware. The organizing goal of the collection, in fact, is to acknowledge the "rich messiness of learning and teaching—to avoid the limitations of neat thinking and pat positions," a goal that Elbow accomplishes by continually complicating his own position, describing its limitations, arguing the other side. A typical Elbow statement: "The full fair answer is both yes and no." While the idea of contraries can be too easy itself, a having *and* eating of cake—while Elbow's application of it can be a little too convenient, too all-encompassing—in the end I think you have to be impressed by Elbow's intellectual integrity, his capacity for genuine self-criticism, self-questioning, self-correction. You can't pigeon-hole him as a "mere" "expressionistic" or "romantic" rhetorician, because he argues too rigorously for the values of "methodological doubt" and "disciplinary thinking." It's the creator *and* the critic, he is saying, the concrete and the disciplinary, the exploratory and the systematized. And there are many things that can't be accounted for by his theories, he admits, beliefs that he can't demonstrate fully, hunches he must resign to the messiness or the mysteriousness of the process.

That's finally the crucial point in *Embracing Contraries*: that Elbow acknowledges complexities and doubts and problems, and still "believes," to use the word he develops in the final essay in the book, "Methodological Doubting and Believing: Contraries in Inquiry." The book is important as an example, one of our few, of a "systematic, disciplined and conscious attempt to believe."

That is: Elbow is continually acknowledging his own beliefs, *as* beliefs—his motives for maintaining what he can't always prove, the reasons behind it. He is up front, "laying his weapons on the table," as he puts it. Which is to say that unlike many of the "bourgeois realists" that Berlin and others take to task, Elbow doesn't mystify his own positions or pretend that they are self-evident, beyond point of view. "I cannot escape an ad hominem critical reading of this book," Elbow admits, "for in the end I am really engaged in trying to work out a definition of good learning that doesn't exclude me." Elbow's autobiographical self-consciousness, in other words, is not just an effective rhetorical strategy but a way of acknowledging what the contemporary theorists are calling "ideology" (resurrecting and rehabilitating that word). I would like Elbow at some point to respond directly to those in the "social-epistemic" school, those who argue, with Berlin, that there is no "transcendent self," no voice, and that all meaning is the product of convention and institution. I would like to see him build their terms into his set of governing contraries. But even without that direct confrontation, what makes Elbow important in the contemporary debate is that in a sense he already demystifies, unmasks himself. He argues his ideology directly.

The crucial difference between Elbow and Berlin (Berlin seen as representative of the social-epistemic rhetoricians) is that Berlin argues principally as a critic of other positions, employing the doubting game almost exclusively, while Elbow spends most of his time arguing for belief, for what he believes and what others can believe, even though he at the same time acknowledges doubt and problems. He demystifies and still believes. He risks belief. He risks being naive. Far from being just a refreshing rhetorical gesture, this kind of openness argues a profound insight about the need for enabling assumptions, about the need to begin and end in the concrete, the experiential. ("I think I see compulsive doubters as more dominated by unaware beliefs than other people are," Elbow says at one point.) Maybe, Elbow is saying, implicitly and explicitly, maybe we need to postpone the critic to get the real work, the best work, out—as writers, as teachers of writing, as theorists about writing and the teaching of writing.

Chris Anderson is an assistant professor of English at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon, where he is also Coordinator of Composition.

Peggy Riley

Imagery: Thinking with the Mind's Eye

John Ciardi, in his book *How Does A Poem Mean?* suggests a simple experiment to show that "thoughts are made of pictures." Pause, he says, make an effort to clear your mind, and then " 'think' some central experience as 'Home for Christmas.' Instantly many 'thoughts' flash through one's mind. And clearly those thoughts are not words but 'pictures' (and recollections of other sensory impressions such as sounds, smells, tastes)."(1) I tried this experiment in my introduction to literature class; I asked my students to close their eyes and watch carefully what happened in their minds when I repeated the words, "home for Christmas." I waited a few moments, then asked what happened. What did they see? hear? smell? The results astonished them: Christmas trees, the family, stockings; they could hear carols, bells, conversations; smell pine needles, turkeys roasting; taste homemade fudge. Some of them had poignant responses. Some saw Christmases of years ago; others saw a recent Christmas. But no one saw the words "home for Christmas" passing across their minds like words on a ticker tape. I know that imagery is central to poetry, but I hadn't made the conscious connection between imagery and thought before. I had always considered thinking (if I thought about it at all) as the manipulation of abstract symbols, something that scientists and mathematicians did, not as the creation or recreation of concrete sensory images.

Intrigued by my students' responses to Ciardi's exercise, I looked up the definition of the verb "to think" in the Oxford English Dictionary. What I found surprised me. The definition reads, in part,

to think: to conceive in the mind; to exercise the mind, esp, the understanding, in any active way; to form connected ideas of any kind; to form or have an idea of (a thing, action, or circumstance, real or imaginary) in one's mind; to imagine, conceive, fancy, picture.

Although experience tells us that thinking is not limited to imagery—when we think we consciously or subconsciously incorporate emotions, for example, or previous experiences, memory, or mythical patterns—image-making is central to the thinking process.(2) So when we wonder, sometimes, why we struggle to teach Shakespeare or Donne or Dylan Thomas—in other words, why we teach literature—we find one answer in the definition of the verb "to think": we teach literature to help our students expand and develop their image-making powers, "to imagine, conceive, fancy, picture," to think.

This leads naturally to another question: how? Most of us got into the English business because we love to read, but how do we reach a generation of students who are accustomed to passively receiving images from television and movies rather than actively recreating images through reading? What specifically can we do in the classroom to get the students involved in literature, especially poetry? Many of my community college students have had very little exposure to poetry, some none at all. They tend to think of literature as a world outside themselves, a world they don't inhabit. I needed to figure out a way to engage the students with what they read before they read it, to give them a stake in what they read, and to familiarize them with two great delights in reading: delight in recognizing something familiar, and delight in discovering something new.

What I came up with might seem at first like a classic example of putting the cart before the horse. My idea was to have the students write about a poem before they read it, to have them experience for themselves some of the creative energy that goes into poetry, to have them experience imagery and—yes—metaphorical language themselves before seeing how a poet uses them, thereby grounding their experience of learning something new into their own pre-existing knowledge and experience.(3) In other words, I wanted my students to establish a connection between themselves and literature, and to establish this connection by writing.

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...we teach literature to help our students expand and develop their image-making powers, "to imagine, conceive, fancy, picture," to think.

Imagery: Thinking with the Mind's Eye

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I begin my introduction to literature course with poetry, and I begin the study of poetry with Frost's "The Witch of Coos" because it's so immediately accessible. It's a narrative poem, telling of a man who "stayed the night for shelter" at the home of an old country woman and her 40-year-old son, "two old believers." The old woman—a witch—and her son tell the stranger a story about a skeleton that haunts their house, where he came from, why he's there. The poem includes stuff that students find agreeable: mystery (who was the skeleton?), murder (the bones begin their travels through the house from "a grave down in the cellar"), the supernatural (the skeleton/ghost itself), "weird" people (the 40-year-old son still at home with Mom), perhaps an illicit love affair (between the old woman and the man the bones once were), the occult (the witch).

Before they read Frost's poem, though, I ask my students to imagine, to "think," a skeleton. What does the skeleton look like? Feel like? Smell like? Sound like? How would it look if it moved? I allow them a few minutes to create an image of the skeleton in their minds, then ask them to spend about ten minutes describing that skeleton in a paragraph, trying to be as detailed as possible. The students then share their paragraphs in groups of three or four (larger groups would take up too much time). Each group chooses one paragraph to read aloud to the class. Then, as a class, we talk about each chosen paragraph: what did the writer do to create the image? What kinds of words did he or she use? Colors? Sizes? Shapes? Sounds? Did the writer use figurative language? (Quite often the students will use figurative language without realizing it. Searching for words to create the description, students consciously or unconsciously compare the skeleton to something else. One student described her image of the skeleton as moving "like a puppet on a string, its feet not quite touching the floor," and another compared his skeleton's rib cage to "a bird cage without the bird.")

Here the students are discussing and examining their own writing and that of their peers, and it's exciting for them. They realize their own writing has validity and creativity, that it's worthy of discussion and examination. They are eager to share their writing, to discuss how they came up with their images, how they "imagined, conceived, fancied, pictured." "Could you see it?" I ask. For many of them it's a revelation. They did not see the word s-k-e-l-e-t-o-n in their heads; they saw the image, a picture, of a skeleton.

As writers and thinkers they created unique images (no two descriptions will be the same even though the students all describe the same thing, a skeleton). The students are eager to share their writing, to discuss what was going on in their minds as the images appeared.

"Well," I say, "this is part of what a poet does. He creates an image so you as readers can see what he sees. And, perhaps, when you see what he sees you will feel what he feels. Then you will have experienced what a poem 'means'." And I point out that their eagerness to share their writing corresponds to the eagerness many poets feel to share theirs. A poem doesn't exist in a vacuum; it is created to be read.

So far the students haven't read Frost's poem but, through their imaginings, they have been introduced to it. Now I assign reading "The Witch of Coos" for the next class meeting, asking the students to note carefully how Frost describes his skeleton and how their descriptions are similar to or different from his. At the next class session, the students share their experience of reading the poem and of comparing

This exercise ... introduces them to more delights of reading: swapping favorite parts of the story and sharing a common experience.

Frost's descriptions with their own. If it doesn't come up in the discussion (and it usually does), I point out that many students used similes to help create their image of a skeleton: "like a puppet," "like a birdcage." So does Frost: "[It] carried itself like a pile of dishes"; "I had a vision of them put together/Not like a man but like a chandelier"; "... it looked like lightning or a scribble."

Then I play a recording of Frost reading his poem and have the students mark passages which seem especially vivid to them as they listen to it, but this time I ask them to look for images other than visual images: images of sound, sensation; images that arouse emotion (passages of the poem that are scary or funny).(4) As soon as the recording is over, the students write a brief (ten-minute) response to the image that struck them most particularly, then share these responses in groups as they had their descriptions. This exercise not only focuses their attention on the poem's variety of imagery, it introduces them to more delights of reading: swapping favorite parts of the story and sharing a common experience. Each group chooses a person to read his or her paragraph aloud to the class. As before, the students' responses determine the class discussion. Hearing the poem (the sound an echo to the sense) adds another dimension to its reading, and the discussion can be wide- ranging indeed. We can talk about blank verse and the rhythm of poetry (students will ask why this is a poem if it doesn't rhyme), onomatopoeia ("the faintest restless rustling ran all through them"), repetition ("brushing

their chalky skull with chalky fingers"), more subtle metaphors (do the images of snow and coldness suggest something about the marriage the old woman and her husband endured?).

The next step is to have the students write a more formal paper, one in which they examine a particular facet of the poem in more detail. At the end of this second class session, after we've heard, discussed, and written about the poem, I ask the students what kinds of questions they have. We brainstorm a bit, while I write their questions on the board: What kind of a marriage was it? Who were the bones? What kind of person is the son? Can we believe the mother? Is she really a witch? Why all the images of cold and snow? Who is the narrator? Then, for their more formal writing assignment, the students consider one of these questions, questions that they've generated themselves, using evidence from the poem to support their response. When the students leave to write their papers, they do not leave empty-handed. They have two paragraphs which they've written themselves in class, they have a marked-up copy of the poem to look at, they're alert to imagery and how it is used in the poem to evoke emotions, they've had feedback on their own writing, they've shared the experience of reading the poem with peers and can discuss the poem and their ideas about it outside of class if they wish. And not least, their shared experience of the poem has pulled the class together as a community of scholars, cogitating, wondering, discussing, arguing: was there really a skeleton or wasn't there? The students are discovering that the connection between themselves and literature is common human experience.

"We still ask boys in college to think, as in the nineties," said Robert Frost, "but we seldom tell them what thinking means; we seldom tell them it is just putting this and that together; it is saying one thing in terms of another. To tell them is to set their feet on the first rung of a ladder the top of which sticks through the sky."(5) When I asked my students to "think" "home for Christmas," they first had to put two complex notions together: "home" and "Christmas." Connecting these two abstract ideas resulted in sensory imagery, imagery that would have been different had I said "home for dinner" or "a trip at Christmas." After forming these connected ideas, more connections happened, each student drawing on his or her own memories, perceptions, relationships.

...the poem has pulled the class together as a community of scholars, cogitating, wondering, discussing, arguing...discovering that the connection between themselves and literature is common human experience.

This is the important first step: "just putting this and that together." But the key to active response to their reading is the students' writing, writing before, during, and after reading the poem. Writing about Frost's "Witch of Coos," the students experience bringing their memories and perceptions to reading using a concrete notion: a skeleton. (Writing about a more difficult poem like Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," the students see how a poet, and how they themselves, can articulate emotion and other abstract concepts through imagery, can transform emotion to imagery and therefore to thought.[6])

If there were a simple verb incorporating all aspects of the study of literature, "to literature," say, the *OED* definition of "to think" with its emphasis on imagery, metaphor, picturing, would fit precisely. I don't know who coined the redundancy "critical thinking," but I do know that as English teachers our aim all along has been to stimulate our students to develop their own innate image-making powers through reading and writing. The ability to create and recreate imagery is the ability to think, to think with the mind's eye.

Notes and Sources

1. John Ciardi, *How Does a Poem Mean?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959) 864.

2. George Lakoff, preface, *Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal about the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

Lakoff summarizes his argument in the Preface, challenging the traditional Aristotelian view that "reason is abstract and disembodied," the mechanical manipulation of abstract symbols by a mind that is an abstract machine, like a computer, and argues that recent research suggests a new view: that "Thought is embodied . . . that conceptual systems grow out of bodily experience," and that "Thought is imaginative, in that those concepts which are not directly grounded in experience employ metaphor, metonymy, and mental imagery" (p. xiv).

What all this boils down to is that the "imaginative aspects of reason—metaphor, metonomy, and mental imagery—[are] central to reason, rather than . . . a peripherhal and inconsequential adjunct to the literal" (p. xi). Teaching literature, then, with its emphasis on figurative language, goes beyond the ideas of enculturation, of traditional didacticism (Sidney's "teach and delight") which includes moral instruction and increased understanding of human nature, to the very core, the seed, of the thinking process itself.

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Imagery: Thinking with the Mind's Eye

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3. Kevin McKean, "Memory," *Discover*, November 1983: 24. This article reports on research linking memory and the learning process.

4. Robert Frost, "The Witch of Coos," *Robert Frost Reads His Poetry*, Caedmon, 61-7521, 1956. This audiotape is conveniently available through the Book-of-the-Month Club, Camp Hill, PA 17012.

5. Robert Frost, "Education by Poetry: A Meditative Monologue," *The Norton Reader*, ed. Arthur M. Eastman et al., 6th ed. (New York: Norton, 1984) 1025.

That this piece was originally a talk given to Amherst College in 1930 reinforces the point that poets may have preceded cognitive scientists in discovering the link between imagery and thinking. There is also food for thought in the fact that computers are unable to "think" metaphorically.

6. This sequence—writing about a poem before it's read, then reading the poem, then listening to the poem read aloud and discussing particular images from the poem in class, and finally writing a more formal paper—is effective with poems more complex and difficult than "The Witch of Coos." For example, before my students read Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning," I ask them to write a paragraph in response to the following: Suppose you and someone you love very much are going to be separated for a while. What would your feelings be? What would you say to your loved one? Can you think of any images—pictures—to show your loved one how you feel about him or her and about the separation?

As they did with the Frost poem, the students create their own images, this time of the abstract ideas of love and separation. Doing so gives them a way into Donne's poem and can lead to a lively discussion of his central metaphor: the compass. This metaphor becomes even more vivid when one student reads the "Valediction" aloud while another manipulates a drawing compass to recreate graphically Donne's images.

Peggy Riley teaches English at Chabot College/Valley Campus, in Livermore, California. She is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project.

The Unteachables

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Ordinary People in small groups. On Wednesday, Group One, having spent Tuesday in the library preparing, leads a whole class discussion; they throw M&Ms to those who answer their questions; they throw M&Ms at those who refuse to answer and call them assholes. Then, they grade the class on participation. I record those grades in my book.

Far away in a corner of the room, I write my critique of Group One's efforts. They've done a good job: class participation is at an all-time high and their questions about the book show they have read well. I give them a B. ("You just can't use that language in here.")

On Friday, Group Two gives a vocabulary quiz, having listed the Important Words on the board earlier in the week. The quiz is a crossword puzzle. Almost everybody gets an A. I get a C because I didn't study. Group Two gets a B because the quiz doesn't include any writing. An argument ensues. I win. ("And the only reason you got a B is that yours is the first quiz.")

For me, the major difference is that I'm not in the spotlight. I have spent an enormous amount of time, behind the scenes, constructing the schedule and displaying it for all to see; classtime I spend with my trusty clipboard, monitoring their efficiency during their small group discussions and evaluating their teaching. I write in my journal: "I feel funny. I feel like a manager, a bookkeeper, a foreman. I must not forget the book." But I end my journal entry with "Oh, what a pleasure not to be pushed (by self) to cover material."

Here's the real difference: the kids are reading, they are writing, they are talking about the book. Maybe none of this is getting done as quickly or as intensively or as efficiently as it would if I were center stage. But no. I remember what Dave told me way back in October: "Face it, Mrs. Juska, nobody read 'Fall of the House of Whatever'!" Now they're proceeding, and in fact, not just in my wishful imagination. Whatever is happening in this classroom is really happening; it's not pretend.

Friday, I get a petition: "Get rid of the logs. Get rid of the clipboard." Signed, everybody.

What the hell. I do it. Week Two is chaos. They talk in their groups about who got kicked out of whose house, about the fight in the locker room, about getting drunk at Santa Cruz, about everything but the book. By Wednesday, I am ready to throw in the towel. This is ridiculous. Anything is better than this, even pretending. Then I remind myself: your instincts told you to trust these kids; don't quit now. On Thursday, I once again mask myself in nonchalance and, leaning casually against my desk, ask them how they think things are going. Things, they say, have not been going very well. They suggest that instead of the clipboard, they write to me at the end of each group discussion; they think it would be a good idea to tell what they talked about and how they're getting along with the book, and maybe I could write back. Yes, I could. They ask me if I would once in a while read aloud from the book and would I lead a whole class discussion maybe a couple of times. Yes, I would. They say, they believe they should be held responsible for learning something and do I think their suggestions would help? I do.

In December, as they had planned, they finish the book, write about it once they have chosen the topics, and watch the film. "This is the first book I ever read," says Darrin. "I think the movie was too hard on the mother," says Kathy. "What're we going to do next?" asks Bobby. God knows.

I look at my fifth period class. I look at them for real and all weekend wherever I go, whatever I do, I am seeing my Bs. I see Walkmans peeping out of athletic bags, ready for use should my vigilance weaken. I see makeup spilling out of purses. I see Mike, full of allergies or something, his head down on his desk with Jennifer behind him, twisting her feet onto his chair, leaning forward to breathe on his neck. I see Chuck, his boogie board balanced against the wall next to him, Matt drawing half-men, half-beasts for the record cover he wants to make. I see Lisa, her eyes vacant, unresponsive except when Bart makes obscene noises with his tongue. I see Darrin embrace (not even surreptitiously) Melissa.

What are we going to do next? What chance have I got? What chance has a book got? But wait, they read *Ordinary People*; they wrote about it; they talked about it. And, by golly, they liked it, not the book necessarily, but what had happened to the class. "This is my favorite class," a few of them said. Not all of them, not most of them, but a few.

"We want to go on a field trip," they tell me after Christmas break. What hath I wrought? But we do, and they agree to do an I-Search paper. They even agree to follow my instruction on how to write better sentences; they let me be center stage. "For now." We end the year reading and talking about books and writing stories and poems. By June, we're just about all in the orchestra.

What has not changed since the beginning of the year is their growing sense of power. I keep Glasser in mind whenever I feel like chickening out and going back to S.O.P. They like having some control. One afternoon I wheel out the overhead to show them some writing. Dave blurts out, "Put that thing away; whenever a teacher gets it out, I feel like I don't have any control." I put it away. I write on the board instead. Dave approves. I like their having control. I feel an enormous relief with the responsibility out there instead of down here, that is, right on top of my shoulders. What is being learned is being learned by them, not by me.

But I think they learned, too, that once you've experienced power, second best is no longer good enough. And that maybe, just maybe, having power is worth the trouble.

But I worry. I worry that the learning is not enough in quantity and in kind. I worry that they need sometimes to be cajoled, pushed into accepting the responsibility for what goes on in this room. I worry that once in a while they don't seem to like each other now any better than they did in September. And I especially worry when they say, "Let's go back to the old way. You do it. It's easier."

So I do. I try it for a couple of weeks in May, and we are all, every single one of us, miserable, bored, and disappointed in ourselves. We had given up and we knew it. The other way, the "New Way," we had learned a lot. The Bs learned that, while power is at first a heady thing, it soon becomes hard work. But I think they learned, too, that once you've experienced power, second best is no longer good enough. And that maybe, just maybe, having power is worth the trouble.

And I? I of course learned more than anyone; some things never change. I learned that, with some guidance, kids will choose what's good for them; I learned that believing in them will not result in mayhem. I learned that center stage belongs to everybody, that moving scenery in the wings can be rewarding, that selling tickets can be fun, and that sitting in the critic's seat is a heavy responsibility. And I learned that if you have the patience and the trust and determination to put it all together, you get great theater.

So what do we do next season? Well, in September, I give Power to the Bs; and then I charm, urge, and finally insist that they accept the responsibility that goes along with power. If they do, we're all home free.

Jane Juska teaches English at Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord, California. She is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project.

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Susan L. Lytle and Marilyn Cochran-Smith

Teacher Research: Toward Clarifying the Concept

Traditionally there has been a disturbing distinction between the wisdom of school-based teachers and the wisdom of university-based researchers. Generally teachers' wisdom has been regarded as practical, action-oriented and experiential, while researchers' wisdom has been thought of as theoretical, analytic and empirical. The current reform agenda in education has centered on ways to make teaching and teacher education more systematic, rigorous, and knowledge-based. Yet efforts to construct and codify a knowledge base for teaching have primarily relied on university-based research. The equation between knowledge and university research is implicit in *The Handbook of Research on Teaching* (1986), widely viewed as the most comprehensive synthesis of research in the field. However, it contains no articles written by school-based teachers themselves nor, as far as we can determine, are published accounts of teachers' work cited. Even the collaborative projects cited usually construct teachers' roles in the research process and thereby frame and mediate teachers' perspectives through researchers' perspectives. Consequently, not foregrounded in this collection of reviews that purports to define our knowledge of teaching are teachers themselves—the voices of teachers, the questions that teachers ask, and the interpretive frames that teachers use to understand and improve their own classroom practices.

Limiting the official knowledge base for teaching to what academics have chosen to study and write about disenfranchises teachers and relegates their knowledge to the status of practical information or common sense. This contributes to a number of problems: discontinuity between what is taught in universities and what occurs

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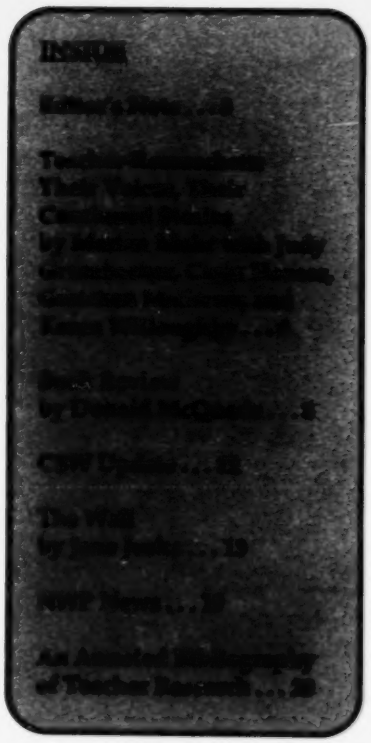

Teacher Research: Toward Clarifying the Concept

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Unfortunately teacher research, which by definition has unique potential to address issues that teachers identify as significant, does not yet have an acknowledged place in constructing the knowledge base for teaching.

in classrooms; teachers' ambivalence about or disregard for the claims of academic research which often seems counter-intuitive or unconnected to the daily demands of their work lives; and, because teachers are seldom recognized as potential contributors to the making of knowledge, a dearth of codified information about the reality of classroom life from the perspectives of insiders. Unfortunately teacher research, which by definition has unique potential to address issues that teachers identify as significant, does not yet have an acknowledged place in constructing the knowledge base for teaching.

Relating Teacher Research and Research on Teaching

Many teacher-researchers model their classroom and school-based inquiries on more traditional university-based social science research. Myers (1985) has been influential in arguing for the adaptation of basic and applied social science research paradigms to teacher research. He suggests that the norms of generalizability, tests of significance, and optimizing controls of problems apply to teacher research, but need to be defined differently by classroom teachers. Myers calls for teacher-researchers to be well-grounded in problem definition, research design, and quantitative data analysis, and suggests that they begin by replicating the studies of university-based researchers. In contrast to Myers, Mohr and MacLean (1987) and Bissex and Bullock (1987) argue that teacher research is essentially a new genre not necessarily bound by the constraints of traditional research paradigms; they urge teachers to identify their own questions, document their observations, analyze and interpret data in light of their current theories, and share their results primarily with other teachers. Berthoff (in Goswami and Stillman, 1987) puts little emphasis on data gathering and, instead, asserts that teachers already have all the information they need and should reexamine, or in her word "RE-search," their own experiences.

Each of these sets of recommendations for teacher research contains an image of what the genre might look like—an approximation of university-based research; a more grass-roots phenomenon that has its own internal standards of logic, consistency, and clarity; or a reflective or reflexive process for the benefit of the individual teacher. Yet each of these images, although quite different, also implicitly compares teacher research to university-based research on teaching. In this section we explore what we consider a problematic relationship between research on teaching and teacher research.

Research Questions. Although it may appear self-evident that the research questions in teacher research emanate from the day-to-day experiences of teachers themselves, this is not a trivial issue. In traditional university-based classroom research, researchers' questions reflect careful study of the existing theoretical and empirical literature. Teachers' questions, on the other hand, often emerge from discrepancies between what is intended and what occurs: initially these are experienced as a concern about a student's progress, a classroom routine which is floundering, conflict or tension among students, or as a desire to try out some particular new approach. This questioning process is highly reflexive, immediate, and referenced to particular children and classroom contexts: What happens when my "high-risk" second graders shift from a basal reading program to a whole language curriculum? How will I know when my students are on the way to thinking like mathematicians and not simply learning new routines? How do my digressions from lesson plans contribute to and/or detract from my goals for the students? How do students' theories of teaching and learning shape and become shaped by writing conferences?

Although these questions are not framed in the language of educational theory, they are indeed about discrepancies between theory and practice. Although they are not always motivated by a need to generalize beyond the immediate case, they may in fact be relevant to a wide variety of contexts. The questions of teacher-researchers are, at once, more general than questions that concentrate on the effectiveness of specific techniques, materials, or instructional methods and more specific than interpretive questions which explore the meanings of customary school and classroom events. Teachers' questions are not simply elaborated versions of "What can I do Monday morning?" or "What will work in my classroom?" Embedded within the particular questions of teacher-researchers are many other implicit questions about the relationships of concrete, particular cases to more general and abstract theories of learning and teaching. For example, when a teacher asks, "What will happen if I use journals with my first graders at the beginning of the school year before they have begun to read?" she is also asking, more generally: How does children's reading development relate to their writing development? Does some explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships have to precede children's expressive uses of those relationships? Do children have knowledge of these relationships before they begin formal reading in-

struction? If they do, where does this knowledge come from? What is the relationship between "errors" and growth in writing? One feature of the questions that prompt teacher research is that they emanate solely from neither theory nor practice, but from critical reflection on the intersection of the two.

Generalizability. The criterion of generalizability has often been used to discount the value of research prompted by the questions of individual teachers and conducted in single classrooms. However, as Zumwalt (1982) effectively argues, there is a growing realization in the research community that the positivistic paradigm which attempts to formulate general laws is not the appropriate one for understanding educational phenomena. Zumwalt points out that generalizations about teaching and learning are by definition context-free. Zumwalt is arguing that rather than laws about what works generically in classrooms, we need insights into how things work within the contexts of particular classrooms.

A similar point is made by interpretive researchers who argue that understanding one classroom helps us better to understand the complexities of all classrooms. Teachers are uniquely situated to conduct such inquiries: they have opportunities to observe learners over long periods of time and in a variety of academic and social situations; they often bring many years of knowledge about the culture of the community, school, and classroom; and they experience the ongoing events of classroom life in relation to their particular roles as teachers. This set of lenses sets the perspectives of teachers apart from those of others who look in classrooms. Knoblauch and Brannon (1988) make a related point in their recent article on the phenomenological basis of teacher research. "The story-telling of the teacher-inquirer in a classroom devoted to language practices has its peculiar features and makes a distinctive contribution to our knowledge of school experience . . . The telling aims not at selectivity or simplification but at richness of texture and intentional complexity" (p. 24).

Theoretical Frameworks. There is also considerable disagreement about the ways in which teacher research may be theoretically grounded. In a discussion of practical theories of teaching, Sanders and McCutcheon (1986) argue that teaching requires intentional and skillful action within real-world situations. The success of these actions depends on the ability to perceive relevant features of complex, problematic, and changeable situations and to make appropriate choices. The knowledge necessary to perform these professional tasks has been called "theories of action" (Argyris, 1982). Rather than make a distinction between professional knowledge and educational theory, as is usually done, Sanders and McCutcheon make the case that professional knowledge is essentially theoretical knowledge. This position contrasts with North's (1987) recent analysis of practitioners' knowledge in composition. North calls professional knowledge "lore," and defines it as "the accumulated body of traditions, practices, and beliefs in terms of which practitioners understand how writing is done, learned and taught" (p. 22). Although North seems critical of the

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Editor's Note

A major challenge of our research is to find creative, thorough and exact ways to discover what we don't yet know about language learning and development and the social and cognitive processes that underlie them. A major challenge of our teaching is to find, within the context of the classroom, creative, thorough, and exact ways to make similar discoveries about our students and about how they learn to read and write. In a sense, teachers hone, daily, the science of investigation that we call research. Casting new light on this crucial process, teacher research makes visible the critical system that constitutes what we have come to name "practical knowledge" and opens it up to professional scrutiny. This issue of The Quarterly *is devoted to this important subject, addressing it from a variety of angles.*

Susan Lytle and Marilyn Cochran-Smith offer ways to conceptualize teacher research, supporting its validity as a way of knowing and showing how teachers across the country are applying its principles both inside and outside the classroom. Marian Mohr introduces three teacher researchers whom she works with in Fairfax County, Virginia, who tell stories of how teacher research has supported their development in the classroom and their development as resources to other teachers. Jane Juska reports on her own teacher research, a project to discover the effects of computers on the writing of at-risk high school students. And, finally, an annotated bibliography points the way toward useful readings on the subject of teacher research. Veering from our teacher research theme, in this issue, too, we present a review by Donald McQuade of Mike Rose's Lives on the Boundary, *new from Macmillan's Free Press.*

This issue of The Quarterly *is an introduction of sorts to future issues that will focus on teacher research. We look forward, for example, to three interrelated articles to appear later this year that address the relationship of teacher research to university research. We invite your contributions and your response on this subject.*

--M.S.

Marian Mohr with Judy Grumbacher, Carin Hauser, Gretchen Mathews, and Karen Willoughby

Teacher-Researchers: Their Voices, Their Continued Stories

It fills my bookcases, stored and labeled in three-ring binders or arranged in various file folders under various labels, and now it begins to fill up disks. It grows. A note from a teacher-researcher friend tells of something he or she is doing and instead of being able to view it as a friendly message, I will, with permission, record it, file it. It is part of someone's continued story.

This "it," a friendly alien, is the collected data from teacher-researchers I have known. My data live with me, an intimate mass of information in which variables seem to generate boisterously while nuances are elusive. Yet I continue to collect—correspondence, newly published articles, notes on telephone conversations, notes from meetings where I am invited as an observer at long-established teacher-researcher projects, my log recordings and comments on conversations with colleagues whom I see daily or weekly, gleanings read or told to me from other teacher-researchers' logs now into their second or third study, and of course my own tattered papers—my life and my logs.

In these papers I notice a change. The teacher-researcher term is now jargon, whole conferences are devoted to the topic, RFP's arrive from the federal government as well as NCTE, university researchers and professional teachers of teachers approach the subject paternally and maternally and people teach teacher-researchers how to do their work who have never been teacher-researchers themselves. Teacher-researchers criticize each other and warn about the dangers of having less than rigorous work done in the name of research. We have arrived as a phenomenon; attention is being paid.

I worry that, while being much talked about, teacher-researchers will themselves disappear. We will become stages in someone else's development scale. We will be segregated to special categories reserved for teacher-researchers. We will become token professionals in the larger world of research. We will be molded to fit established ambitions, Ph.D. program research, for example.

The problem is larger even than that of analyzing Godzilla. How is it possible to present the data, how to have the voices heard without distortion?

The courage it demands to insist that your own observations of your work are no more hampered by preconceived notions and assumptions than those of an outsider-observer is hard to sustain. The classroom is a critical environment where confidence is regularly shaken. More importantly, the lack of support in the form of released time and reward for research, writing, and publishing, means that a teacher-researcher must tend to his or her own needs for response and recognition. Of course teachers have traditionally done this, but not with the added burden of self-scrutinization that teacher-researchers regularly carry.

The problem is larger even than that of analyzing Godzilla. How is it possible to present the data, how to have the voices heard without distortion? Perhaps this question represents the researcher's ultimate evasion, the chase through the city streets as the alien, friendly, not understanding its own strength, reaches out for a smothering embrace—my analogy collapses. The data form not into a theory, but into a series of individual stories; not into patterns, but into people.

What follow are the voices of experienced teacher-researchers. They are speaking to a large audience of teachers of all grade levels attending a conference on language and learning. My remarks were prepared for this same forum. Together we were trying to uncover, analyze, and explain what happens to teacher-researchers as they work.

Carin Hauser, Forest Edge Elementary School, Fairfax County, VA:

My first teacher-researcher project started with questions I had about my third graders and how, when, and why they revised their writing. I was curious also about the role I played as I conferred with them, and why some of these youngsters revised, while some of them did not, or at least appeared not to revise. . . .

An exciting advantage I have over outside researchers is that my perceptions, observations, and intuition are all firmly grounded in the context of my classroom. That is also a difficulty of teacher research. It's hard to look dispassionately at something that you're in the middle of. So I find that my research journal, like an anthropologist's field notes, becomes very important in helping me figure out what is really going on.

In one research study, I looked at what happens when my students write about their reading. That study started out of conflict—my students wouldn't write in their reading logs—they didn't at first seem to think the assignment was important. But I found that my students were very willing collaborators as we figured out together how to use the logs in our literature studies. They explained and reexplained what they thought of the reading logs when I interviewed them. They wanted to be sure I got things down right as I wrote their responses to my questions in my research journal.

Collaboration extends beyond the walls of my classroom to working with other teacher-researchers. It's wonderful not to be isolated and to be in touch with other teachers who are committed to looking in depth at what is really going on in their classrooms. That helps me stay connected to my profession and actually strengthens my commitment to teaching. My research groups have helped me look at the data I gather and make sense of it. I guess you could say they keep me honest.

This year I feel very lucky. We at Forest Edge Elementary School have a group of teacher-researchers all at one school. That has been a dream of mine for quite some time. Several of us are looking at questions involving assessment in reading and writing. Like my other projects, this one starts with a problem—how can I involve my students in assessment, so that they can internalize the process? Perhaps my research question will be something like "What happens when students assess their own progress in reading and writing? What words do they use to describe their work?" I'm not sure yet what form this study will take.

Research is a little bit like writing—sometimes you're not sure where you're going when you start.

Research is a little bit like writing—sometimes you're not sure where you're going when you start. However, I've come to trust that the writing shows the writer the way. So does the research. I will probably start my study by asking some simple questions of my students. What do readers do? What do writers do? What do you notice about your reading and your writing? I am still learning how not to ask questions that have hidden assumptions in them. That's where it's wonderful to have someone else to hear me out as this tangled-up process evolves.

Our classrooms are such rich sources of interaction among many readers and writers and all kinds of learners. I like getting to the bottom of things, kind of like being a detective. I like looking at my students as sources of information about learning.

Gretchen Mathews, Frost Intermediate School, Fairfax County:

There's an old wives' tale that warns us to be careful what we wish for because we might get it. When I first began researching my eighth grade students' reading and writing processes, I "wished" that I could figure out why the use of reader response logs seemed to work so well in my classroom. I found out that they did indeed work well, but I made a few other discoveries in the process. In a sense I got what I wished for.

Students responded to what they had read with an honesty I had not anticipated. I had carefully chosen short stories of literary merit that I thought would appeal to them, stories with adolescent heroes who were "coming of age." They called them "relationships" stories and expertly explained in their reader responses why these stories did *not* appeal to them, using all the literary terms and elementary critical approaches we had talked about. The responses emphasized a troubling paradox. My students liked to read, but they didn't like to read literature, or at least what I considered literature. My student Heather pretty much summed up the class's ideal novel: "about a boy who meets a girl in the future and they solve mysteries together using a lot of science and then get married." Another spoke for the rest of the students about *English* stories when she wrote, "I got to thinking there had to be more to this story than I thought. After all we *were* reading this story in *English*, weren't we?" There was a definite difference between reading and "reading in English."

Reviewing my research log and data, I decided that what my reader response log process needed was student choices about what they read. But I knew that they were apprehensive (some terrified) about sharing those choices with their peers, and

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Teacher-Researchers: Their Voices, Their Continued Stories

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that the choices they made would not include classical or significant modern literature.

Luck found me, believe it or not, in the way of Stephen King. I thought of him as a consumer author, one that I wanted students to get away from. But I couldn't dismiss the fact that his writing spoke to so many students in a way that the stories I had chosen did not. While writing our first paper, an experience-based monologue, my students kept telling me about the movie *Stand by Me*, based on *The Body*, a novella by Stephen King, because of its similarity to the paper we were writing. I gave a bonus assignment to write a response to the movie or the book.

Reviewing my research log and data, I decided that what my reader response log process needed was student choices about what they read.

Many of the responses referred back to the "relationships" stories. One student wrote: "*Stand By Me* is like *Marigolds* in the way that the main characters were both torn between acting immature like everyone else or acting in a mature, cool way . . . both pretty much hit on the same theme, growing up." Another student wrote that it was "the kind of movie that got you thinking about things you really don't think of often, like life and death and the meaning of it all. This story was one which makes me want to write a book and make a movie on my experiences as a child to share with the world."

I immediately saw the movie, and a kid in my class brought me a copy of the book. They were right. I saw what they saw—the ageless representation of the problems of growing up in its glory and its pain. I was those kids. My kids were those kids. Stephen King had taught me something, and I shared this discovery with the kids. We had connected.

Through my research, I am becoming more and more convinced that the secret of teaching students to enjoy reading and to appreciate literature lies in the teacher's ability to become a reader and response writer among her students, a *pupil* who respects their choices and offers an encouraging ear to their ideas.

Judy Grumbacher, Falls Church High School, Fairfax County:

One of the things physics students have difficulty with is solving problems. While it is possible to do a lot of physics without doing mathematical calculations, at some point it becomes necessary to solve problems, which is, after all, what physicists do. I began teacher research by looking at what successful problem-solvers do differently—besides getting correct answers—than less successful problem solvers. Initially I hoped that I'd find some magic bullet. I'd find out what the good ones did and teach the poorer students to do the same thing.

I had some difficulty beginning classroom research because I thought of research in a narrow, experimentally-based way. Asking questions like, "What happens when students write to learn physics?" seemed to me, at first, to lack the rigor of science. My data didn't fit into neat charts the way physical data do. Rather, they consisted mostly of my teaching log and my students' logs and papers. Somewhere, somehow during the first year of classroom research I discovered the wisdom of Yogi Berra's remark, "you can see a lot just by looking." When I started looking, I saw that successful problem-solvers used their logs to think aloud on paper, to explore approaches to a problem, to wrestle with the ideas of physics contained within the numbers. Less successful students' logs were mostly numbers, with little explanation of where the numbers came from and why they were manipulated the way they were.

As a result of my initial encounter with teacher research, I have changed the way I look at my teaching and educational research. I've always read research and tried to teach according to research findings. The difference now is that instead of looking only at educational research done by expert outsiders that may or may not be what my students need, I also look within—to ask what's working in my classes and what isn't. My focus and method of inquiry have shifted. I ask myself why it's important to me and to my students to learn certain things. When I can't answer that question, then I know that I have to revise what I'm teaching.

Looking over this year's teaching log, I found questions like:

Is this the year I'll truly have the courage of my convictions?

Is it unreasonable to expect kids to do this?

Why is it important that kids do this assignment?

Why do I give a damn about unit conversions? (a question my students also had)

Teacher research has forced me to change the way I look at classroom disruptions:

There's a good bit of talking going on. What to do? Let it go or stop it now? I think I'll keep writing and discuss it tomorrow. I think they may actually be talking about

physics because I just heard someone use the phrase "initial velocity."

Teacher research has also changed the way I do things in my classroom:

Time to slow down—I feel like I'm racing—trying to do too much, cram too much in. So slow down and relax and give the kids a chance to do the same.

I don't always find answers to the questions I have about what's happening in my classes. But what has happened is that I'm learning to look for answers within my classroom, to trust the expertise of my students and colleagues and to use that knowledge to explore ways of teaching and learning physics.

Karen Willoughby, Resource Teacher in Science and Writing, Fairfax County Schools:

Several years ago I was in the middle of explaining a writing assignment to my fourth graders. There was no prewriting or any actual teaching of writing, just the assignment written on the board: "How I Spent My Weekend." My students were expected to use dictionaries to look up unfamiliar words as they wrote their stories. I never mentioned the word "draft." The first attempt was the final one and was turned in to me for a grade.

My students' reactions were no different from those of other students in other years: they balked, with loud moans and groans, about writing. "Why?" they asked, "Why do we have to write about that? How long does it have to be?" I didn't have a convincing answer to make the writing task more palatable. But when I allowed them to "have their own way," they wrote beyond their experience; the writing was dull and had no substance.

In those early years I don't remember much of why I assigned what I did. With enthusiasm, though, I targeted writing because it had been difficult for me in school. I spent many hours reading and wondering why Brian wrote one run-on sentence after another following an unbelievable plot line, or why Sharon couldn't stretch beyond three-word sentences.

Frustrated and tired of floundering on my own, I enrolled in a class to learn how to teach the process of writing to my students. That course led to an intensive summer writing institute followed by a teacher-researcher seminar. With each experience I grew to understand more about myself as a learner and a teacher.

An outgrowth of this whole process was my reflection about my overlapping career paths—nursing and teaching. There are many parallels. Being an effective listener, an astute observer, and a thorough data collector are the first steps in caring for a patient and teaching a student. The picture is not complete without the involvement of patients in the care plan or students in the lesson plan. Both depend upon interviewing techniques, careful documentation of information, and subsequent interpretations. The "Aha" for me was realizing that my training as a nurse could be useful in my teaching.

Another outgrowth of being a teacher-researcher was what the students taught me. I learned how to be student-directed instead of teacher-centered. I wanted to develop students' critical thinking skills while having them write across the curriculum. I implemented this by asking students to respond, in journals, to my questions. I discovered that just asking questions alone wasn't the solution. Rather, what I did in reaction to their answers, in the form of lesson planning, was key.

I also learned more about how I could do better instructionally than ever before. This came only after months of having students write definitions without benefit of dictionaries and write opinions without checking to see what others thought first. Initially they were paralyzed with the fear of not being right, so it was difficult for them to be honest in their writing. The experience taught me how personalized teaching could be without being overwhelming. When my reaction to their writing was non-judgmental, they learned to write more about what they thought and learned and less about what they thought I wanted. When students asked for my help with an instructional or classroom problem, I realized the power of listening for their voices. I had gradually removed many of the reasons students were inhibited when asked to "talk on paper."

The "Aha" for me was realizing that my training as a nurse could be useful in my teaching.

Just as I listened to patients and learned to listen as carefully to my students, I now have transferred that skill to the teachers I work with in my present job as a resource teacher. When I go into a class, I have a general idea of what I plan to do, but it's the unique interaction between the students and myself that ultimately causes me to revise. So I model this flexibility for other teachers. I further model the process by interviewing, listening to what the teachers say, observing, and assessing how they processes information. I show them the importance of being a question-asker when things are not working as well in their classrooms as they would like. I demonstrate the methods I used to collect data and interpret it, helping teachers to trust their observations and to use them for planning and assessment.

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Books

Donald McQuade

LIVES ON THE BOUNDARY: THE STRUGGLES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMERICA'S UNDERPREPARED
by Mike Rose
New York: The Free Press, 1989

"Decayed Images of the Possible"

In a late 1982 essay printed in *The New York Times* series entitled "The Making of a Writer," Francine du Plessix Gray, the recently-celebrated journalist and novelist, recalls a recurring—and particularly harrowing—nightmare from her youth:

Facing a friend, I struggle for words and emit no sound, I have an urgent message to share but am struck dumb. My jaw is clamped shut as in a metal vise. I gasp for breath and cannot set my tongue free. And at the dream's end, my friend has fled and I am locked into the solitude of silence.

Du Plessix Gray attributes the recurrence of this nightmare, at least in part, to her father's impatience with her youthful writing, to his swift and sardonic tongue, and to his constantly interrupting her when she tried to speak. The passage continues:

So it may have begun, the central torment of my life, my simultaneous need to commit fantasies to paper and the terror that accompanies that need, the leaden slowness of the word's arrival, my struggle with the clamped metal jaws of mouth and mind.

Later, as a student at a writing workshop at Black Mountain College, du Plessix Gray submitted revisions of several prize-winning stories from her undergraduate years at Barnard. After having read them, her mentor, no less a towering and imposing figure than the six-foot-eight poet Charles Olsen, told her: "You're writing pure junk. . . . If you want to be a writer keep it to a journal. . . . And above all don't try to publish anything for ten years."

Francine du Plessix Gray's first piece of fiction was published in *The New Yorker* one year *past* the distant deadline Charles Olsen had set for her. In struggling to come to terms with why she had persisted in writing, despite what she called "the continuing anguish of the act," and the dissatisfaction she—and obviously others—felt toward the results, du Plessix Gray explained:

I write out of a desire for revenge against reality, to destroy forever the stuttering powerless child I once was, to gain the love and attention that silenced child never had, to allay the dissatisfaction I still have with myself, to be something other than what I am. . . . I remain sustained by a definition of faith once offered me by Ivan Illich: "Faith is a readiness for the surprise." I write because I have faith in the possibility that I can eventually surprise myself. I am still occasionally plagued by that recurring nightmare of my jaw being clamped shut, my mouth frozen in silence. But I wake up from it with less dread, with the hope that some day my tongue will loosen and emit a surprising new sound which even I, at first, shall not be able to understand.

These statements by Francine du Plessix Gray evoke far more than the appreciable pleasure of a successful modern-day rendition of the Orphic myth. What I find remarkable in them is that du Plessix Gray speaks to us from both sides of what she calls "the solitude of silence."

Du Plessix Gray is quite clearly someone who has come to terms with her skills and intentions,

if not entirely with her ambitions, as a writer. So too, most of us who write know all too well something of the anguish bristling in that image of a jaw's being "clamped shut." Facing such predicaments, we, like du Plessix Gray, can be encouraged by Ivan Illich's definition of "faith": "a readiness for the surprise." Part of the enduring pleasure of writing for each of us is precisely that element of surprise, that life-long pleasure in discovering new dimensions of our own resourcefulness with language, of evoking new ways to know ourselves and the world that is larger than the self. We write not only to discover meaning; we write to create meaning. We write not only to discover the self; we write to create the self.

Mike Rose has written a compelling book on the struggles and the achievements of America's underprepared to use language to discover and create the self. His view of people with jaws "clamped shut" includes none of the privileged socio-cultural circumstances of du Plessix Gray's education. What is so remarkable about Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* is that in it he speaks from both sides of what Francine du Plessix Gray calls "the solitude of silence." A masterful blend of autobiography, vignette, case study, reflection, and analysis, *Lives on the Boundary* is also the most searing commentary we have had in years on the institutional neglect and mismanagement to which working-class Americans are subjected in the name of education:

We have provided elementary education for virtually all Americans for some time now, and we fret more than many societies do about meeting the diverse needs of these young people. We test them and assess them—even kindergartners are given an array of readiness measures—in order to determine what they know and don't know, can and can't do. The supreme irony, though, is that the very means we use to determine those needs—and the various remedial procedures that derive from them—can wreak profound harm on our children, usually, but by no means only, those who are already behind the economic and political eight ball.

The problems Rose identifies with American education are principally institutional; his portraits of young ethnics and older students trying to reclaim their intelligences through literacy reveal that deficiencies in American education are endemic to the system, not the students. And he views that world in tough-minded terms. "It would be an act of hollow and evil optimism," Rose explains, "to downplay the problems of American schools—the way they're structured and financed, the unevenness of their curricula, the low status of their teachers, their dreary record with the poor and disenfranchised...." He documents the nature and extent of those problems in an engaging series of personal portraits, including scenes from his own life on the streets.

Rose, a prominent contributor to the distinguished writing program at U.C.L.A., was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania, to parents who met at a "steamy diner with twangy-voiced waitresses and graveyard stew." When the Pennsylvania railroad abandoned the town, his family moved to Southern California and promptly fell into what he calls "the abyss of Paradise." As a youngster Rose was labelled a "slow learner" and placed in the "vocational track" because his standardized test scores "got confused with another student named Rose." He went to school, he explains, and "sat in class and memorized more than understood and whistled past the academic graveyard":

If you're a working-class kid in the vocational track...you're defined by your school as "slow"; you're placed in a curriculum that isn't designed to liberate you but to occupy you, or, if you're lucky, train you, though the training is for work the society does not esteem....

Like innumerable students in similar circumstances, Rose's sensibility comes alive as soon as

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he leaves the confines of the classroom and releases himself into the flow of life on the streets. In a Whitmanesque series of catalogues, Rose bathes himself in the opulent energy and rhythms of the street people and scenes in east L.A. His richly-textured blend of observation, inference, and cultural nuance recreates one memorable scene, one memorable portrait, after another—from "transvestites with rouge the color of bacon" to "isolationist fantasies of the demi-monde" that would "yield another kind of death, a surrender to the culture's lost core." Each of Rose's sentences is moored in what William James calls "the grub fact" of experience. In this respect, the book draws much of its power from an exquisitely simple pattern of observation and inference. And what makes the pattern—and the rhythm of the sentences that highlight the pattern—so memorable is Rose's skill at observing so carefully. He has an ethnographer's eye and a poet's sensitivity to nuances of detail. His observations are precise and ripe with implicitness, as, for example, in the following succinct characterization of the cultural complexities of life in southern California: "Palm trees swaying on cotton shirts, Pakistanis on skateboards...." The only item missing from Rose's masterful catalogue of life in and around an urban elementary parochial school is the chance book.

Rescued in his sophomore year of high school by Brother Clint, his biology teacher, who puzzled over "this Voc Ed. kid who was racking up 98s and 99s on his tests," Rose gradually found himself under the tutelage of Jack MacFarland, his English teacher, and absorbed in the worlds of writing and reading: "It was heady stuff. I felt like a Pop Warner athlete on steroids." Through MacFarland's intercession, Rose was admitted to Loyola University in Los Angeles, where he nervously entered the conversations of academic life. The generous attention of several teachers there helped him earn a graduate fellowship to the English Department at U.C.L.A., where he wrote poetry that sounded like "Tammy Wynette singing haiku" and studied literature with professors who, he quickly came to realize, "pursued the little-known fact, the lost letter, the lucky fissure in language that invites one more special reading." He resigned his fellowship and turned to experimental psychology: "I learned to be cautious and methodical. And I began to appreciate the remarkable complexity of human action and the difficulty of attributing causality to any one condition or event."

Through his service in the Teacher Corps in East L. A., his experience as a counselor of Vietnam veterans, and his experience as a tutor of E.O.P. (Equal Opportunity) students at U.C.L.A., as well as in his volunteer work at a suicide prevention center, Rose learns to live "with decayed images of the possible" and to subvert a system that focuses on what students don't have rather than on the verbal and cultural resources they bring with them to schools and colleges. "Let them see what, collectively, they do know," he urges, "and students will, together, begin to generate meaning and make connections."

In the process of redefining goals for and shifting attitudes in American education, Rose turns upside down our expectations of the meaning of such simple phrases as "the wealth of have-nots" and celebrates the resiliency as well as the determination of those who "live on the margins" to establish increasing authority over their verbal lives.Rose's subject might well evoke comparisons between his book and Mina Shaughnessy's seminal study of basic writers, *Errors and Expectations*. While Shaughnessy and Rose share professional goals and in many cases accomplishments, their perspectives are fundamentally different. Mike Rose writes as an "insider"; each of the problems he describes he experienced first-hand. "I was living through," he explains, "the very conflicts I was cutting and pasting into my notebooks—the conflict between two visions: one of individual possibility and one of environmental limits and determiners."

Harrowing scenes from his own schooling come back to haunt him at U.C.L.A.—in the presence of the complicated lives of people fundamentally

miscast as illiterate. Rose's portraits of his students form an American gallery of the educationally underprivileged. And what is so memorable about Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* is his remarkable ability to recreate the quiet expressiveness of the students with whom he works by modestly stepping back and letting us hear these students speak for themselves. The effect is that Rose enables us to hear how jaws previously "clamped shut" can relax into their eloquence.

The most memorable accounts in *Lives on the Boundary* are the powerful, heart-wrenching vignettes Rose develops of the working-class students whom he has helped over the years. These are people who seem reluctant—or unwilling—to claim any authority for their perceptions, for their ideas, or, more importantly, for themselves. Most, if not all of the members of their families are on the receiving end of experience rather than at its origin. It can even be said of some family members that they have not determined the history of their own lives. These students don't normally generate experiences; they join in. Given the state of the economy, they don't see either their parents or themselves as people who are literally or figuratively "going places." They can muster painfully little evidence of their parents'—or their own—participation in any formidable way in the world around them. And, in many cases, the family's material well-being depends on the parents' keeping one step ahead of what the plant manager calls "technological efficiency" or "cost accounting." There is, in effect, an almost pervasive sense among these students and their families of being expendable. These are people who feel that their work (be it manual or intellectual) does not express enough that is unique in themselves to win the respect of others as individuals.

These are people for whom the word "authority" exists solely in its plural form—the "authorities." It's a concept that most of Rose's students don't perceive as an *activity* in their lives, as an experience fundamentally accessible to them, as something negotiable. More specifically, the students Rose describes most often regard "authority" as an entity, not as an interpretive process. They apparently imagine it, they hear the term, principally as a voice telling what not to do and what to do rather than as a self-generated state of mind, as the ability to articulate and control the states of consciousness they value. Yet what makes *Lives on the Boundary* so inspiring a book to read is Rose's conviction that the prospects are brighter than previously imagined that these students, with the assistance of faculty dedicated both to humanistic principles and to the best interests of their students, will gain increasing authority and exercise increasing mastery over their verbal lives.

I have one reservation about Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary*, what he calls "the stuff of literacy" I would call "literature." When Rose talks about his students' apparent interest in "conveying something meaningful, communicating information, creating narratives, shaping what we see and feel and believe into written language, listening to and reading stories, playing with the sounds of words," he creates the prospect of the enduring pleasures of his students' creating literature; what *Lives on the Boundary* underscores is that literature can surface far beyond the restrictive boundaries of canonical texts, that literature is a fundamental, and enabling, dimension of all of our lives, no matter how seemingly marginal the positions of the people who produce these new texts.

As teachers and writers, we can find in Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* powerful reminders of our students'—and by extension our citizenry's—struggles (not, finally, unlike each of our own) to loosen jaws "clamped shut." However hesitatingly our students may speak at first, they *can* relax into their own eloquence. And I suspect that it is our collective belief in the principles of a fully literate democracy and our faith in our students' abilities to surprise us—just as we take special pleasure in surprising ourselves as thinkers and writers—that impel us to teach as best we can year

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after year. We are, after all, engaged in the collaborative enterprise of educating people to educate themselves *and* others.

As Mike Rose has done for his students, we need to help students to recognize as soon as possible and cultivate as best they can their own authority for their work. Many students are not ready to sustain themselves in what du Plessix Gray calls "the solitude of silence." Most students cannot literally or figuratively wait du Plessix Gray's eleven years before speaking publicly, before registering their voices in the consciousness of the communities and cultures in which they are expected to participate. And given the socio-economic, political, and cultural deprivation that haunts so many dimensions of contemporary American life, the risks seem more urgent—the stakes higher—than even the losses implicit in "the solitude of silence." Mike Rose eloquently demonstrates in *Lives on the Boundary* that as writers and teachers, our purposes should result in more than a "faith" in "the readiness for the surprise." Without encouraging—and actively assisting—*all* of our students to do more writing and reading as well as to understand the nature of their own authority in relation to these acts, we may find ourselves, along with our students, in far more harrowing circumstances—struggling to express our individual and collective identities in what Paolo Friere has called "the culture of silence." Mike Rose's *Lives on the Boundary* offers eloquent evidence that each of us can succeed.

Donald McQuade is a professor of English and Chancellor's Fellow at the University of California, Berkeley.

CSW

UPDATE... UPDATE...

HAAS AND FLOWER WIN 1989 BRADDOCK AWARD

Christina Haas, post-doctoral fellow at Carnegie Mellon University, and Linda Flower, co-director of the Center for the Study of Writing and professor of rhetoric at Carnegie Mellon, are the winners of the 1989 Braddock Award for the best article on the teaching of writing to appear in *College Composition and Communication* last year. The article, "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning," was published in the May 1988 issue of *CCC*. The Braddock Award honors the late Richard Braddock, University of Iowa and 1967 chair of the Conference on College Composition and Communication.

TWO TEACHER RESEARCH GROUPS TO SHARE IDEAS

In April, teacher-researcher groups headed by Bob Tierney at U.C. Berkeley and by Jim Hahn at U.C. Davis will meet on the Berkeley campus for a one-day seminar. This seminar will bring the two groups together for the first time to talk about their current studies. Teacher-researchers will be sharing their work in progress, their findings to date, and questions or problems with the activity of conducting research while teaching.

ANDREW MELLON GRANT

The Center for the Study of Writing at Carnegie Mellon University has received a $1.5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for support of a Literacy in Science Center. Researchers from the Psychology Department and the Center for the Study of Writing will investigate how people learn to reason quantitatively, integrate text and graphics, and read and write scientific materials. For example, one researcher will study how to improve the clarity of scientific textbooks; another will examine how gifted children differ from non-gifted children in their understanding of scientific problems. The Literacy in Science Center will include eight research projects that focus on children in kindergarten through eighth grade, involving the collaboration of Carnegie Mellon researchers and Pittsburgh public school teachers.

Jane Juska

The Wall

"Do we have to write in here?"

"I hate to write."

"I'll read, but I won't write."

That's what I knew after teaching at-risk ninth-grade students for fifteen of my twenty-three years in the classroom. Lately, my District has come to call this class Developmental English, a change from what we used to call it, English 1C (two steps down from English 1A). What do you call a classroom full of kids who read three to five years below grade level (when they read at all), and if given the choice to write, don't. Yet I do not think of my kids as developmental students. I do not think of them as readers and writers in utero, soon to be newborn scholars. I think of them as remedial, a term out of fashion, having been replaced by "marginal," "borderline," words like that. My kids are all of these, I suppose. But to me, a teacher of reading and writing, those words apply to the parts of their lives outside my jurisdiction. If we want to get picky, my kids are remediable, "capable of being remedied," according to the dictionary. Nonetheless, "remedial" is what I call them, from habit, yes; because "remediable" is hard to say, yes; but mainly because the word "remedy" is what I'm after. And my kids, as writers, are in need of remedy for an illness that has plagued them over the last ten of their fourteen years, an illness which has, during most of those years, caused them pain, suffering, and humiliation. It is an illness which grows worse with each passing year. My kids can't read and write like other kids, and because they can't, they are miserable; they are angry, sometimes violent. Most of them will not finish high school.

Writing cannot remain hidden for long. Once kids write, all mystery disappears. All games are over. All pretense is futile. And what appears on my students' papers day after day is ugly; and that ugliness is truly what separates their writing—and them—from the Regular kids. So my students try to hide their writing for as long as possible. They will tackle some pretty hard books just so they can carry them around, show them off. Not so their writing. Their writing stays stuffed in notebooks, if they continue to keep notebooks after the first few weeks, in their writing folders in the classroom, at least until their folders get "stolen." Often they disguise their writing. Sometimes it becomes origami, beautiful birds that sail across the room. Or it may turn into a sleek airplane, its nose cutting into the space somewhere above my head. Or it turns into a basketball, crumpled round, arcing into the wastepaper basket. Whatever the disguise, the one requirement is that it hide the writing on it. For that writing is a signal to everybody, certainly to my students, that they are different, that they are not Regular. Of course they resist writing: how much more evidence do they need to convince them of their own stupidity?

My students do not write in pages. They write in inches, or half-inches. Sometimes, with great effort on their parts and mine, they write as much as half a foot.

My students' writing, then, is short. There it is, the best of it, up on the wall. The handwriting is ugly so there's not much of it. For, as everybody in high school knows, papers written by Regular kids are a page or two or even five. They are long! My students do not write in pages. They write in inches, or half-inches. Sometimes, with great effort on their parts and mine, they write as much as half a foot. We are all elated—until they get a look at the pages written by the Regular kids. Regular writing looks good; some of it is downright beautiful. The lines of the letters slant in the same direction and to the same degree; they don't wind all over the place. The *o*'s

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and the *a*'s close up: the *t*'s swoop up: they don't twist this way and that. The letters are all the same size, except for the ones like capitals that should be bigger. And they go where they're supposed to, either right or below the line. Some of it looks even like teacher writing. Looking at those pages must be like hearing the Regular kids read aloud, only worse. For what is reading aloud but sound, short-lived sound. Writing is sound and sense and shape and thickness and time. Put together, the parts of writing say more about the writer than reading aloud ever could. "Don't put my paper on the wall!" No wonder.

Given all that, my writers don't spend much time writing, maybe ten minutes, including prewriting. Ten minutes a day, on a good day fifteen with lots of "I'm done's" peppering the silence long before. "Did you use to write this long?" I ask them, hoping for a "No, it's your wonderfulness as a teacher which has inspired me to write these ten minutes." They say instead, "I used to write even longer in the fifth grade." Well, why not, I think. Here they are fourteen or older, and their handwriting looks like it did in the fifth grade. It looks ugly. It looks hopeless. Besides, getting these three inches down on paper has been painful. Writing hurts. The hand gets twisted into a deformed doughnut, a doughnut Winchells would toss out. The hand tenses. It resists. It calls out, "Stop this!" And the writer obeys.

To help, I have tried every method I have ever come across in any workshop I have ever attended. I have read some books on teaching remedial students how to write. My students and I have prewritten till the cows came home; we have clustered; we have mapped; we have listed; we have drawn pictures; we have discussed. Then, they have written. Then they have responded to each other's writing (no easy task since showing their writing becomes a part of their daily humiliation). "Here," they say to me, "you fix it! You're the teacher." And I have. I have asked questions on draft one that they answer in draft two. Over the years I have proofread miles and miles of their papers. They have copied and recopied and finally, when the paper is more mine than theirs, they are willing to let somebody see it, maybe. More than likely, however, they shove it quickly into their writing folders in case I might want to put it up on the wall. Because there is still a problem. No matter if margins decorate both edges, no matter if spelling errors have vanished, one thing keeps that awful writing theirs: the handwriting. Or the printing. "Don't put my paper on the wall!" "But it's the best writing you've ever done!" "I said don't do it." Inside me, I agree with them. The writing, well, it looks not Regular.

Under pressure from the department chair, along with urgings from several respected colleagues, I began that summer to learn to write on the computer. I loved it.

So here I am—the English teacher who, with twenty-three years of experience, is certain to fix all this. That is what the kids think each September when they gather together once again (for they have been with each other, many of them, for more than ten years now). Maybe this year we will get to be normal. Maybe this time, maybe this person can help me.

But I do not help them very much. I do not because, after all this time, I do not know how.

All this I knew about remedial writing. But I had to admit I knew some important things about myself as a teacher. Twenty years ago I had taken a year off from the classroom to have a baby. When I returned, I made the request: "Please, no remedials." I had had it with trying to discipline the undisciplinable, teach the unteachable. Five years later I agreed to try it again. This time the carrot the department chair dangled in front of my nose was different. This year the department had agreed to make room in its Regular classes for one or two more kids so that the remedial class could be kept at a maximum of twenty. That class size has lasted over the years and is, more than any real help I have been able to give, what has kept me a teacher of remedial English. I do not apologize for teaching under false pretenses, at least not to other teachers, for most of them will understand. But how do I explain to my students that their very fewness, one of the things that marks them as different, is what draws me to them each fall? How do I tell them that the fewer the kids the fewer my failures? How can I tell them that the teacher who stands before them each September, the person they see as the one who maybe, this time, will help them, is in truth as much a victim as they? I can't.

What I knew finally came last spring when I learned that the following September our English Department would have a Computer Lab, or Room as I prefer to call it. I knew that in that room fifteen computers would sit ready for use. Under pressure from the department chair, along with urgings from several respected colleagues, I began that summer to learn to write on the computer. I loved it. If writing had become, almost overnight, half as much effort for me, if I had spent playing with revision and pouring forth screens of words, could my students, too, come to like their writing? Could this Computer Room hold the antidote for a poison that has threatened to spread beyond me into an undeserving classroom?

Late August I drive to school and look at my enrollment: Developmental English: 15 students. Well, I say to myself, give it your best shot. If it's not now, it might be never.

* * *

September arrives, so does October, and the Computer Room is not ready: it has to be properly wired, stocked, etc., etc., and "All these things take time, Jane." For my part, no matter how loudly I protest, I am relieved, for I have learned to live with circumstances as they were. The future scares me. And so we cluster and write and draw and write and talk and write and read and write every day. And nothing has changed. The writing is short. It's ugly. But wait, one thing is different: in September, knowing what I intended to do, I began to keep a logbook in which I entered my feelings and observations about my second period class and myself as a teacher of computer writing or composing in the Eighties or whatever. I find that I am indeed apprehensive, but for the first September within memory I am interested. Hallelujah.

In a questionnaire designed by me, the kids tell me some of them have had previous computer experience, some as much as two years at their intermediate school, our feeder school. Not all the experiences were positive: Meredith informs me she got bad grades and will never write on the computer. Most of them tell me that they didn't really write (except for Tim who says, "I wrote my term paper on the computer"); they learned how to work the computer and "had to put together a notebook and stuff like that." Notebooks and learning how to work a computer are not two of my interests, but I am both disturbed and relieved: I won't find out how it is to teach real computer beginners; these kids are at least keyboard literate. On the other hand, we can get to real writing faster.

My original thought had been to take the kids in there and say, "Have at it." This is an idea I do not discard. But I write in my logbook after reading their questionnaires: "This is ironic. I don't know as much as they about computers, much less how to teach with them." Tim, who wrote his term paper last year on the computer, looks at me over his glasses in silent agreement.

The day before my second period students and I are scheduled for sure to go into that room, which has now assumed enormous and ominous proportions in my mind, I write in my log: "My research subjects are so badly behaved I wonder if research is possible or even if they are deserving of special attention." And, "My anger stands between the kids and me. I write this on its outer edge. Yesterday was the middle." Well, I am not bored.

D-Day minus 1: Again my log: "Control may be a problem. Kids are so hairy in the classroom will they behave with computers...I have decided and told them that they are to choose one piece from their writing folders they like well enough to put on the computer. They are to save the piece and print." Am I crazy?

Wednesday, November 12: D-Day: Here is where I describe in detail what happened. Here is where I show how each kid picked up his disk, went quietly to his pre-assigned computer, and face aglow with pride in his work, bent at once to the task ahead. Or here is where I show how the kids picked up their disks and boomeranged them into the air, slashing windows and passing faculty. Here is where I show them inserting pencils into disk drives, ripping surge protectors from their outlets, spray-painting over the letters on the computer keys.

But I can't remember. My log, scribbled in before we go, records my tenseness: "We are going. Am I nervous?" And, after school, this bland entry: "All went well. Everybody put a piece of writing into the computer and saved. Tomorrow we print."

Somehow I think a miracle happened in there, and as with most miracles, the details get hazy. I can tell you, though, that as I began to regain consciousness in the ensuing weeks, Scenario Number One was common. Scenario Number Two never happened.

Next day I leap into class. I am so glad to see them and to tell them how wonderful they were/are/will be forever and ever. So I tell them, and then I show them my logbook. I read a couple of entries. They are pleased and want to know, "So who're you researching besides us?" "Just us," I say. They beam and turn willingly to writing about how they felt yesterday high-teching it through the Eighties.

In the Computer Room, writing time increases to twenty minutes or more. Sometimes, it is the end of the fifty-five minute period when I call out, "Time to save!" or "Time to print!"

Sam writes: "When I started writing on the computers I noticed that it took less time and what I really like about it is that you can change things or move them to where you want to have them. The printing was kind of hard but when it did print it was really fast." (Sam is a good speller.)

Tai writes: "The computer did make a lot of difference because it help me on the spelling, and leaned things. And its alot of fund..."

From Mark: "I think computers help your writing because you can chang a letter, word, senterd, or a whole parigraf without messing it up."

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Ernie: "It was killer, but I don't think computers will help my handwriteing. The computer did it all."

Lest I forget, Tim reminds me: "I'm not so happy about that word processer because I was told it was a very neet programe. I don't think they told the truth. I like Apple works alot better and would recemend it too."

And, finally John: "My writting is better."

I am feeling good. Every single response from every single kid (Tim excepted) is positive. The trick, I decide, is not to let them go without an idea of what they're going to write. And I give each student a grade at the end of each class based on how quickly they get to work and how long they stay at it. Everybody, excluding John, gets an A every time we go to the Computer Room. John has trouble getting to class on time; he does not get an A.

Shortly after Triumph Number One, we collect ideas of what to write about. They enter these into the computer in case they're ever at a loss for writing ideas. So far—and I write this in April—they have not been at a loss and rarely refer to their lists.

I wonder about prewriting. The list is prewriting, of course, but what about clustering and mapping and drawing and all this stuff? I decide to try this: we cluster a word for our usual five minutes, then take the cluster to the Room and the students write from it. After this exercise, we talk about the cluster. Kids don't think it helped much; they're pretty sure they could've composed immediately on the computer. From what I have seen of their "spontaneous" composition, I am inclined to agree. They resent being tied to their clusters and their writing soon veers off into topics of their choice: track meets, parties, and friends. The connection between prewriting and composing on the computer remains unanswered, at least by me and my gang of fifteen.

Some of my other questions, however, do get answered. Would the time spent on composing increase? Would the computer increase fluency? The answer to both, a resounding yes.

I begin to time them, to record the minutes they spend writing. Our daily handwritten exercises in September and October lasted five to ten minutes. In the Computer Room, writing time increases to twenty minutes or more. Sometimes, it is the end of the fifty-five-minute period when I call out, "Time to save!" or "Time to print!" that causes the end of their composing.

In January, I ask them to count the number of words in the longest piece they wrote by hand, then to count the number of words in the longest piece they have written on the computer. They do this willingly because they know the results: they will do well. Jurey's longest handwritten piece contains fifty-five words. In January his computer piece contains 228 words. Mark, who wrote fifty-five words in September, wrote 364 in January using the computer.

They also counted the number of words in their first computer pieces, begun in November. They did this because most of them had lost or thrown away their handwritten pieces. Again, the increase is remarkable—in Lidia's case from fifty-one to 156, in Tai's case from fifty-five to 154. Tim refused to count his words, covering as they did several pages of printout.

John has lost everything but his computer-generated reviews of *Gone With the Wind* (three of them). Parwana says to me, "Well, Mrs. Juska, you must have lost everything because I can't find my writing."

Sam becomes a puzzlement. The number of words he wrote actually decreased. By hand, Sam used to write beyond inches, sometimes almost a page. Now, he hardly ever prints out anything, and when he does, it is disappointing—short or unfinished or scattered with *x*'s and *o*'s or all three. I could blame this regression on what I know have been serious problems in Sam's home; but what I think, looking again at Sam's handwritten pieces, is that Sam likes his handwriting; it has probably been some cause for pride over the years, and the computer has taken that away from him. (I show this part of my paper to Sam who reads it and says grimly, "Sounds about right.") The real problem, though, is that I have neglected Sam as long as he has been "busy" at the computer, pretending that he will, one of these days, print out something as substantial as his old pieces. So far he hasn't. What cheers me is that Sam is the only real pretending I have had to do. I contrast that to past pretending when any kind of measurement of progress threatened the fantasy I had constructed in order to get up in the morning.

Then there's Jesse: Jesse arrived at our school some time in December and swore that of course he knew computers just like everybody else. He did not; he did not know the keyboard, where to turn the machine on, what to do. But he and I both knew his handwriting was just about unreadable. So, a little like Sam, we pretended. We pretended that he would do just fine. Every computer day Jesse hunted and picked over the keyboard, he played around with the machine, and gradually began to write a piece about his skateboard. His writing did get longer; he did spend more time composing. But he can't claim the improvement the rest of the class can. That's o.k. It may be that Jesse has come the farthest of all, and without being shackled to a computer manual or to exercises designated by the teacher to teach

Computer Operations. Every computer day he earned his A. Not long ago he began what would become six lines of writing with this sentence: "Skateing is like dyeing." Not bad.

So—are their papers ready for the wall? They look good all printed and margined. Until you look closely, until you check out the spelling and the punctuation, until you finally have to face the fact that it's more than handwriting that keeps their writing from being Regular. It's correctness, or rather it's lack of correctness. Shall we try it? Shall we go Beyond Fluency into the uncharted and dangerous territory of Revision? Why not? It's March, the longest, the deadest, the ugliest, the cruelest month of the year. Let's wake it up.

I ask them questions about revision: Do they like to do it? "No." When they want to make a paper better, what do they do? "Corect spelling, punctuation, and so an." Whom do they ask for help? "Teache." What is the hardest part about revising? "Thinking of what could be better."

After a modeling session led by me, they sit at tables and write on each other's copies about what they like and what they want to know more about. They are ready to revise—on the computer.

I have assigned them to writing groups of three or four other students, students they have written to me they wouldn't mind showing their stuff to. They choose, once again, a piece of their writing, this time writing they have done with the aid of the computer, writing they like well enough to do more work on. Now, unlike September, they have copies for everybody, eventually, that is. Not everybody is ready with his copies at the same time. So what happens is that the writing groups fall apart. Whenever a kid is ready with his or her printouts, he or she joins a group at one of the work tables. Some kids are bothered by this: "This isn't my group!" wails Parwana. But most never seem to notice. I wonder why. Is it that their more Regular-looking writing makes them less chary about showing their stuff? I don't know. I didn't ask them. I just like what's happening. Hands off, I think.

After a modeling session led by me, they sit at tables and write on each other's copies what they like and what they want to know more about. They are ready to revise—on the computer. I move to a table where Jurey's group has written down four or five things they want to know more about. This is what I hear:

Jurey: Well, I'll just add this stuff at the end when I do my revising.

Mario: No, man, you can't! You gotta fit it in as you go along!

Jurey: (with a frown) That takes too long. I don't want to type that whole thing again.

Mario: Hey, man, you don't have to! You just move that little flicker thing wherever you want, and type the stuff, like right in the middle, and the computer will fix it all up!

Jurey: (brightening) Oh, o.k.

Resisting the urge to hug them both, I skip to record this conversation in my log. Then it hits me. I haven't told anyone how to revise, that is, how to insert, how to delete, how to move stuff around. In fact, I have never tried that myself with this program. The bell rings. 'Saved.

The day before spring vacation arrives, and we are tired. It is our fifth month here on our once-a-week-computer-day schedule. That makes it only twenty days? Has to be more; we have accomplished lots. But I want to know about this revision. Some kids have started to revise; other have not. I am determined that today everybody will revise. They are angry. "Hey, look, it's too old!" says Mark. John: "If I don't get this idea for my novel down, I'll just forget it." And blessed Jurey: "Aw come on, you guys, this won't take long."

Then, another miracle: Mark, whose handwriting is illegible, who handwrites in quarter-inches but who gets A's in Mechanical Drawing, rises, crosses to the board and draws a diagram (in 3-D) of the keyboard and the monitor. Speaking slowly, pointing at different areas of his diagram, Mark shows everybody how to delete and add. I watch with special interest.

The night before I have proofed their papers. Yes, this is work the kids could do in their groups, some of it at least. But lordamercy, there comes a time when a paper, any paper, has to get done! The wall is naked! This proofing, though, is different for me. I can read the words; there are no smudges, no wrinkles; the letters are all the right size; I need not guess at what the kids probably meant. I zoom through the stack, no headache forming as I do, retaining the enamel on my teeth. I have inked in verb endings, basic spelling corrections, words omitted, leaving errors in syntax and diction for their tenth grade teacher.

John goes right to work, and, paying absolutely no attention to my marks on his paper, rewrites his *Gone With the Wind* review (Number Four) making it "even more better than it ever was, Mrs. Juska. Believe me." The rest of the kids, however, whip through their corrections and within ten minutes at the most, have a printout of an "error-free" piece of writing. It looks good—to me, too.

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"I've got a new idea," says Tim. "I'm going to try to cluster on the computer. Can I try that next time?" Yes, Tim, you certainly may. And John, your novel—how terrific next time will be. What I really say is, "O.k., let's print! It's vacation."

* * *

What I have learned follows:

1. Composing on the computer increased fluency as I have measured fluency. The number of words kids wrote on the computer climbed steadily and reached an increase of as much as 400%.

2. The amount of time spent composing increased when kids used computers. Our handwritten exercises, pre-computer, lasted at the most ten minutes. With computers, the time spent writing rose almost immediately to twenty minutes and continued to increase. A corollary to this finding is that the class, the students, were more orderly. Almost without exception, they moved quickly to the writing task before them and stayed with it throughout the period.

3. Computer copy was more legible than their handwritten pieces. As obvious as this may seem, the result is not so readily apparent. The result is that both students and teacher look on the writing with greater respect. Hope rises; revision is likely.

4. Students liked their writing done on computers better than they did their handwritten pieces. In a post-computer questionnaire of the twelve students present on May 6, eleven students said they like the writing they had done on the computer; one no response. "It's neat," "It's longer," "I think more," they answered. Eight students said either that they didn't like the writing they had done by hand or that it was "o.k." Two liked their handwriting, one of those a student new to written English, the other Sam.

5. Pre-writing was still valuable. While I abandoned our daily clustering, seven of the twelve students wrote on their post-computer questionnaire that they wished we still clustered: "It makes ideas you don't expect," said James. The other five students were adamant in their dislike of clustering though their reasons do not appear in their answers on the questionnaire.

6. The computer does not teach writing. I learned that the teacher must still be responsible for leading students into the discovery of ideas, images, and new language. The trick, I believe, is timing. Kids need lots of time to play with the computer, to write what comes out of their heads. Too much direction from the teacher too early on could make writing once again a chore. On the other hand, at some point, their writing must go beyond its initial stages into something worth revising.

The computer does not teach writing...the teacher must still be responsible for leading students into the discovery of ideas, images, and new language. The trick...is timing. Kids need lots of time to play with the computer, to write what comes out of their heads.

7. The chances of having an orderly, business-like classroom, one in which students get to the business at hand, one in which they stay on task for extended periods of time, increased with the aid of computers. A certain amount of fooling around with the computer did, and probably must, occur at the beginning of each student's acquaintanceship with the computer. Thus, screens and printouts covered with designs and nonsense configurations are to be expected. Often, this represented the kids' getting to know the keyboard. Sometimes it was the students' own prewriting. I was not concerned because it did not continue into the year.

8. Revision of computer writing was more likely than of handwritten pieces. Students realized quickly the ease of making changes with the computer. The necessity for copying over disappeared. However, the computer does not teach revision. Students continued to see revision as putting in periods, correcting spelling, and making paragraphs. Not unless the teacher has taught students to find sentences and words that are good, that are saveable; not until students learn to ask questions of writing—"What does the person look like?" "What did these people say to each other?" "Did it rain during the track meet?" "How did you feel about your friend?"—will real revision begin. Thus, modeling, constant shoring up of writing groups, insistence on substantive changes remain the teacher's obligation. What the computer did was to make students more agreeable to making major changes. "Oh, no! not another copying!" became "Yeah, I can do that."

9. Writer frustration did not disappear with the computer. Some of that frustration, however, was directed toward the computer rather than at the teacher. What I will do next year is buy, or have the kids buy, their own disks. Sharing disks with other students in the school is a bother. Fortunately, Bank Street Writer includes a password which, when used, prohibits anyone but the keeper of the password from calling up writing. But that also means that the writer must never forget his password or all his writing is lost. In addition, the

message on the screen, "Disk Full," increased writer-frustration. Still, the load lightened when kids had a computer to swear at.

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We are not, in the end, as hopeless as I had thought. Of the fifteen students who began the year with me, ten have scored high enough on the ninth-grade writing test to move, next year, into Regular English. I do not know if the computer caused this success; I do attribute much of their new-found confidence to their work with the computers. Unlike past years, this year's class wrote more on the ninth-grade writing sample. So off they go, no crutches, looking for all the world—and writing—just like everybody else.

Today, May 1, I preface our computer day with, "In two weeks I want a piece from each of you I can put on the wall. It can be a piece you've already written or revised, or it can be a brand new one that you started today. Your piece will go up on the wall along with the writing from my other classes."

"No problem," says Jesse.

Jane Juska teaches English at Ygnacio Valley High School in Concord, California. She is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project.

NWP NEWS

The South Coast Writing Project (SCWriP) has been selected to represent the California Writing Project as part of a state-funded California Technology Project (CTP), resulting from a grant awarded to the California State University system.

SCWriP will: a) gather data on CWP technology use, resources, and training capacity; b) develop model materials that will encourage and facilitate the inclusion of technology training into CWP activities; c) disseminate those materials; d) provide regular contributions to the CTP journal/newsletter; and e) serve as liaison between the CWP and the CTP Advisory Board.

Stephen Marcus, who directs SCWriP's Computer-Using Fellows (CUF) activities and SCWriP's Advanced Computer Institute/HyperCard Project, will be directing this new effort.

The Wyoming Conference on English will be held on June 19-23, 1989 in Laramie, Wyoming. The conference theme is "Margins of Overlap: Schools, Communities, and Cultures." For further information, call or write Tilly Warnock, English Department, University of Wyoming, Laramie, WY 82071. 307-766-5140.

Teacher-Researchers: Their Voices, Their Continued Stories

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As I listen to these voices again, it seems less necessary to define them and their work, but I begin to think about what they have in common.

1. They question. They ask questions that they don't know the answers to, questions that go to the heart of learning and teaching, questions that they find it impossible to stop asking as one leads to another in a dizzying process.

2. They doubt. They keep asking, "What's happened?" They are a combination of self-doubt and pride, and the tension between the two energizes and tires them. They are interested in the moves of change.

3. They see understanding as a move toward change. They observe a distancing from their teaching yet at the same time an intimacy. They have trained themselves to do this.

4. Their search and their analysis of what they find inform their teaching. They don't teach just because it's fun. They teach in order to understand. As they teach and research, they show their students how someone learns and the whole class becomes a group of researchers.

Eventually this list will be more solid. It will be in columns or explained by a classification code. It will be exhaustive. And someone else will probably have written it. As Hauser, Mathews, Grumbacher, and Willoughby have made clear, it is the nature of the teacher-researcher role to continue questioning; the time for reflecting and analyzing is precious little and hard to come by.

Perhaps it doesn't matter whether the data on teachers as researchers pile up unanalyzed so long as their voices continue to be heard. They do not need to be "empowered" or explained by others in order to continue their work. Perhaps it is also the nature of teacher-researchers, just as they take it upon themselves to understand their students' learning, to take it upon themselves to explain their own.

Marian Mohr teaches at Hayfield Secondary School in Fairfax County, Virginia. She is co-director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project, where the authors who contributed to this article are teacher-researchers. Gretchen Mathews' research article appears in Vital Signs: Experiencing Literature, *James L. Collins, editor. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Boynton/Cook, in press.*

An Annotated Bibliography on Teacher Research

We offer this bibliography on teacher research as the beginning of an on-going look at resources valuable to both teacher-researchers and to university researchers as they examine classrooms and instruction. Our special thanks go to the contributors to this list: **James Hahn,** *Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project and teacher-researcher at the University of California, Davis;* **Marian Mohr,** *Co-Director of the Northern Virginia Writing Project; and* **Bob Tierney,** *Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project and teacher-researcher at the University of California, Berkeley.*

Asher, C. (1987). Developing a pedagogy for a teacher-researcher program. ***English Education, 19*****(4), 211-219.**
Based on the teacher-researcher program Carla Asher and colleague Nancy Wilson lead at the Institute for Literacy Studies at Lehman College, this article describes seven principles that are essential to a functioning teacher-researcher program, often comparing them to similar essentials in the teaching of writing. **M.M.**

Glaze, B. (1987). A teacher speaks out about research. In J. Self (Ed.), ***Plain talk about writing and learning.*** **Richmond, VA: Virginia Department of Education.**
This book was published as a product of a state-wide effort to promote writing and learning. Bernadette Glaze's article describes how, as a teacher-researcher, she weaves together the existing research, her own research questions, and the interests and needs of her students to create a classroom where research is the focus. **M.M.**

Goswami, D., & Stillman, P. (Eds.). (1987). ***Reclaiming the classroom—teacher research as an agency for change.*** **Upper Montclair, NJ: Heinemann Boynton/Cook.**
Dixie Goswami and Peter Stillman have collected nineteen articles related to teacher research. The book makes an excellent reader for any teacher-researcher group because it contains articles about what classroom inquiry is and about how it functions, and it offers possible ways to design studies as well as six sample classroom studies. In the first section, Britton, Berthoff, Macrorie and others discuss the need for teacher research and begin to describe how it differs from traditional models for research. Selections from this section helped our group establish a working definition for what we were starting to do in the fall. The second section, with articles by Emig, Shaughnessy, Atwell and Mohr, helped our group understand the changes we were noticing in our classrooms and ourselves as we got deeper into our studies. The last section, with six studies from teacher-researchers from the Breadloaf program, gave us models to discuss as we started drafting our publications of our own projects. Selections from this book worked very well in conjunction with the program described in *Working Together* by Mohr and MacLean. **J.H.**

Langston Hughes Intermediate School. (1987). ***Teacher research on student learning: A compilation of research studies focusing on minority and underachieving students conducted by the Langston Hughes school-based research group.*** **Fairfax County, VA: Fairfax County Public Schools.**
This teacher-researcher publication is a collection of articles from teachers of various disciplines (English, social studies, physical education, science) who conducted research on minority achievement in their classes and school. Also included are three studies about the teachers who conducted the research and a description of the process they went through. The book was distributed to the rest of the faculty at the school. Copies of it can be obtained from Hughes at 11401 Ridge Heights Road, Reston, Virginia 22091. **M.M.**

Mohr, M. (1988). Teachers as researchers: The opportunity to create a profession. Manuscript submitted for publication.
This article describes different kinds of research that classroom teachers conduct and the various models for teacher-researcher work in university and local school settings. Also discussed are the opportunities that need to be available if teacher-researcher work is to grow and become a vital part of the K-12 teaching profession. **M.M.**

Mohr, M., & MacLean, M. (1987). ***Working together: A guide for teacher-researchers.*** **Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.**
Marian Mohr and Marion MacLean have created a practical guide for starting and maintaining a teacher-researcher group. The book describes the model for a teacher-researcher group established by Mohr at the Northern Virginia Writing Project in 1981-82. It is particularly helpful because of the samples it includes. The sample research logs clearly demonstrate the range of material that teachers may include in a teaching log. They have given teachers just enough direction to be able to keep their own logs. This is critical for teachers to gain a new perspective on their teaching and on research. The sample course outline, with bibliography, and the sample course proposal are helpful for anyone in charge of leading a teacher-researcher group, especially if he or she is thinking of offering it as a course. The sections on "Practice and Process"

and "Issues and Complexities" offer detailed discussions of how their group handled the problems and surprises that occur when teachers undertake classroom research. Our groups experienced the same things Mohr describes in the book. The last section of the book contains six samples of teacher-researcher studies. These are very useful for group discussions of voice and content as teachers wrestle with how to write about what they observe in their classrooms. **J.H.**

Murray, D. (1982). *Learning by teaching.* Upper Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook.
Donald Murray's collected articles on teaching and writing are listed here because he discusses so many issues of interest for classroom research on writing. His book contains articles on assignments, conferencing, revising, editing, grading and even the politics of writing. Selections from this book are very useful depending on the particular aspect a teacher-researcher focuses on in his or her study. However, the central article in the book, "Write Research to be Read," is so important for teacher-researchers to read, I cannot imagine a group not reading and discussing it. We read it just as we began to write up our rough drafts of our studies. It helped each writer establish a clear sense of her own voice. Because teacher research is intended primarily for an audience of teachers, this issue of establishing an authoritative and honest voice is crucial. If other teachers do not believe the voice of the researcher, they will discount the study. **J.H.**

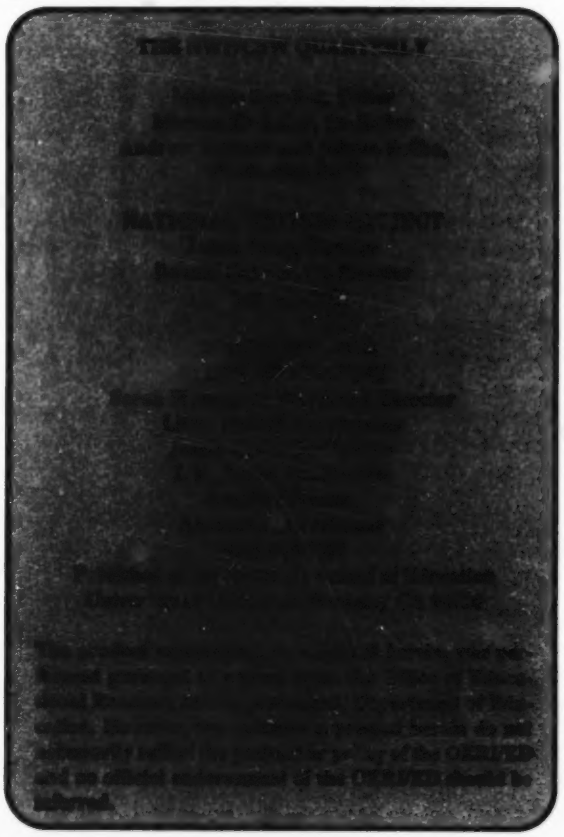
Myers, M. (1985). *The teacher-researcher: How to study writing in the classroom.* Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English/Educational Resources Information Center.
This book was designed as a companion volume to *A Procedure for Writing Assessment and Holistic Scoring* (Myers, 1980). It is written for teachers looking for ways to analyze writing samples and to promote the idea of the teacher's being a researcher. After giving an overview of the various research methods, Myers explores examples of the approaches. The notes on basic statistical methods are useful. **B.T.**

Parson, G. (Ed.). (1985). *Hand in hand: The writing process and the microcomputer.* Juneau, AK: Alaska Department of Education.
This book is the result of a collaborative research effort by ten Alaskan high school teachers to document what happened when they and their students began to use computers and writing process. Since all teacher-researchers in the project had a similar focus to their research, the findings are reliable beyond one classroom. Also included is self case study information from the teachers involved. **M.M.**

Spindler, G. D. (1974). Beth Anne—A case study of culturally defined adjustment and teacher perceptions. *Education and cultural process: Toward an anthropology of education* (pp. 138-153). New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
This is a readable account of a case study that might be used as an example for teachers considering that type of approach. **B.T.**

Sullivan, P. R. (Ed.). (1987). Teachers research. *Curriculum Publication, 2.* San Diego, CA: San Diego Area Writing Project.
This is a series of articles about successful practices used in the classroom by teachers seeking ways to make the practices even more successful. The teachers conducted research to determine how their classroom practices compared with the Model Curriculum Standards. The series serves also as a source of questions for teachers contemplating doing a research project. **B.T.**

Wotring, A. M., & Tierney, R. (1981). *Two studies of writing in high school science.* Berkeley, CA: Bay Area Writing Project.
Pioneers in conducting classroom research projects, Wotring and Tierney document what happened when they began to use writing in the context of science teaching. **M.M.**



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fact that practitioner knowledge has been devalued, conceptions like his may contribute to its devaluation by suggesting that the structure of this knowledge is experiential and driven only by pragmatic logic. From North's perspective, then, teachers' knowledge would hardly qualify as theory, and indeed in North's discussion of practical inquiry—his version of teacher research—there is little mention of theory.

Just as our earlier discussion indicated that there are controversies within the academic community about the feasibility of discovering generalizable laws about teaching, there are similar questions raised about the kinds of theory appropriate to applied fields like education. In applied fields, it has been proposed that various combinations of facts, values and assumptions may better capture the state of knowledge than conventional scientific theories (House, 1980; Zumwalt, 1982). This combination may be particularly compatible with, and productive for, the emerging genre of teacher research which reflects the diverse perspectives teachers bring to the process.

Documentation and Analysis. In many respects the forms of documentation in teacher research resemble the forms used in academic research, particularly the standard forms of interpretive research. Field notes about classroom interactions, interviews with students and teachers, and collections of documents (e.g. students' writing and drawing, test scores, teachers' plans and handouts) are commonly collected by teacher-researchers. In addition, teacher-researchers often keep extensive journals and audio and video tape small and large group discussions, peer and teacher-student conferences, students' debates, role plays and dramatic productions, as well as their own classroom presentations. Like rigorous university-based qualitative research, a strength of teacher research is that it often entails multiple data sources which can be used to confirm and/or illuminate one another. Some university researchers equate data collection with training in the traditions of social science research, yet many teachers already collect some of these data systematically in the course of the normal activity of teaching. Further, a variety of teacher-to-teacher collaborative arrangements, mentioned in the next sections, enables teachers to acquire sophisticated and sensitive observation skills grounded in the context of actual classrooms and schools. Like their forms of documentation, the methods teacher-researchers use for data analysis both resemble and differ from those of university researchers. In our next section, where we posit a working typology for teacher research, we look carefully at the interpretive frames teachers use to analyze classroom data.

A Working Typology for Teacher Research

In arguing for the inclusion of teacher research in the knowledge base for teaching, we are not simply equating teacher research with practitioner knowledge or all kinds of teacher writing, nor are we attempting to attach to the term "teacher" the higher status term "researcher" in order to alter common perceptions of the profession. Rather we think it is important to broaden the concept of teacher research. To do so we take as a working definition for teacher research—**systematic, intentional inquiry conducted by teachers.** Derived from an ongoing survey of the literature of teacher writing, this definition highlights the fact that there already exists a wide array of writing by teachers that is appropriately regarded as "research." By "systematic" we refer primarily to ways of gathering and recording information, documenting experiences inside and outside of classrooms, and making some kind of written record. By "intentional" we signal that teacher research is an activity that is planned rather than spontaneous. Our emphasis on intention is in keeping with Boomer's (1987) suggestion that "to learn deliberately is to research" (p. 5) and with Britton's (1987) notion that "every lesson should be for the teacher an inquiry, some further discovery, a quiet form of research . . . (p. 15). By "inquiry" we suggest that teacher research stems from or generates questions and reflects teachers' desires to make sense of their experiences—to adopt a learning stance toward classroom life, or in Berthoff's sense (1979), to interpret and REsearch the information one already has.

We propose four categories as a tentative typology of teacher research. By describing examples of four types and showing how each is "systematic, intentional inquiry," we make the case that many kinds of teacher writing can and should contribute to the knowledge base of the school and university communities.

Teachers' Journals. *A (Philadelphia) Teacher's Journal* (1985), contains selections from a narrative journal written by first grade teacher Lynne Strieb over a school year. One way to read and understand Strieb's journal is as a teacher's attempt to make sense of her daily work life as a teacher. She seems to be addressing how she connects with her students, how students learn to make sense of the world around them, and how she uses writing to perceive and understand her evolution as a teacher. In Strieb's words,

> *The more I wrote, the more I observed in my classroom and the more I wanted to write. As I reread my journal I got more ideas for teaching. I expanded the journal to include other aspects of teaching—anecdotes, observations of children and their involvement in activities, interactions with parents both in and out of school, my plans, descriptions of the pressures on public school teachers. I also wrote about my continuing education through my own reflections and the questions that*

emerged, through books, and through association with colleagues. (p. 3)

In Strieb's journal we find records of lessons, conversations, children's questions, and detailed descriptions of specific interactions with particular children. In some entries Strieb provides a narrative account of the ongoing daily stream of classroom events; in others she consciously breaks that frame in order to synthesize retrospectively her efforts in certain areas. The journal seems to function here as a way for Strieb to step back from the daily stream, take stock of what is happening, and assess the ways that children respond. In her journal Strieb searches for meaning: the patterns or structures which organize her own teaching and which characterize the children's efforts to learn and cope with the classroom environment.

As inquiry, Strieb's journal contains many implicit and some explicit questions: How can I help children learn English? How can I make children feel comfortable in my class? How can I help this class become a community? What counts as play, what counts as work, and how do the children figure out the differences in my classroom? What do I do about issues of race and gender in my classroom; what is my role here as a teacher? How do children learn to read in this class? What roles do they play in each other's learning? When should I go with a child's ideas, when do I intervene? How can I connect with children's emotions?

There are rich data here about many of the central issues of schooling: how a classroom becomes a community, how a teacher uses children's questions to build, plan and interweave class discussions, how a teacher connects with the interests and needs of individual children, and how a teacher's routines express what counts most to her in her unique context. Strieb's journal also reveals the inherent uncertainty and tentativeness of teaching. The restless questioning that punctuates her journal contrasts dramatically with the certainty of the instructional principles asserted by the literature in effective teaching. Strieb's journal helps to make clear that teachers' journals are more than anecdotal records or loose chronological accounts of particular classroom activities. As systematic intentional inquiry, journals provide windows on what goes on in school through teachers' eyes and in teachers' voices and on some of the ways they use writing to shape and inform their work lives.

Essays by Teachers. We include in the category of essays full-length monographs as well as briefer essays regularly published in academic and professional journals. Despite many forums, teachers' essays are not generally counted as part of the formal knowledge base about teaching, perhaps because they are usually personal, retrospective, and often based on the "narrow" perspective of a single teacher. Rather than disqualifying essays from the knowledge base, however, it is our view that these characteristics are part of what

Like rigorous university-based qualitative research, a strength of teacher research is that it often entails multiple data sources which can be used to confirm and/or illuminate one another.

recommends them. All are systematic intentional inquiries. They use as their data teachers' experiences often over long periods of time. To explore teachers' questions, essays select and analyze significant events and features from the ongoing stream of classroom and school life. By analyzing the patterns and discrepancies that occur, teachers use the interpretive frameworks of practitioners to provide a truly emic, or insider, view that is different from that of an observer, even if that observer assumes an ethnographic stance and spends considerable time in the classroom.

Sometimes A Shining Moment: The Foxfire Experience (1985), Eliot Wigginton's recent monograph on twenty years of high school English teaching, serves as a highly visible example of an extended essay written from a teacher's point of view. As Wigginton points out, the book attempts to answer the broad set of questions which he encountered in talking about his work and to encourage other teachers to continue asking questions of themselves, their students and others. To tell the story of Foxfire, Wigginton draws heavily on his own journals, letters, in-school memos and directives, passages from student writing, and the writing assignments he set for himself. Like Strieb, Wigginton comments directly on the ways writing functioned all along for him as a way to make meaning of his daily teaching life.

Sometimes a Shining Moment contains many explicit and implicit questions. All of these seem to be subsumed by the search to understand how teachers can make schools work for adolescents. Among his questions are: How can teachers get students to come together for a "common cause"? How can they integrate innovative projects into the normal curriculum? How do schools relate to communities? What is power in education? Who has it and who doesn't? What is the extent of the teacher's power? How can teachers help adolescents understand the problems of the world outside the school? How can teachers help students move beyond themselves and their new understandings "into a caring and active relationship with others"? (p. 308). What are the purposes of public high schools? How can teachers find compelling activities which serve all the goals of education simultaneously? Structured by Wigginton's questions, the essay moves from a primary focus on students to concerns about teaching and the assumptions of teachers in general to exploration of curriculum and schooling. At least two themes function as interpre-

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tive frames throughout the book: the discontinuities and connections between life inside and outside of school and the forces which constrain and support the integration of adolescents' lives and the school curriculum.

The centerpiece of *Sometimes a Shining Moment* is a long chapter Wigginton calls "Some Overarching Truths." In this chapter he proposes a number of characteristics common to effective teaching which he has generalized from twenty years experience. The evidence for each proposition is Wigginton's skillful synthesis of events and interactions that occurred within his own classroom and school as well as his reading of educational philosophers and theorists. The validity of Wigginton's generalizations is the extent to which they resonate with the experiences of other teachers, his primary audience for this analysis. Fenstermacher (1986) reminds us that only *some* educational research improves educational practice; this happens, he suggests, "if [the research] bears fruitfully on the premises of practical arguments in the minds of teachers" (p. 47). Wigginton's essay has unusual potential to inform the "practical arguments" or interpretive frameworks that teachers use to understand, articulate, and ultimately improve their own practices.

Accounts of Oral Inquiry Processes. Like teachers' journals and essays, oral inquiry processes represent teachers' self-conscious and often self-critical attempts to make sense of their daily work by talking about it in planned ways. The reflective-descriptive processes developed by Carini and her colleagues at the Prospect Center and School in Bennington, Vermont, provide a good example of formalized teacher inquiry procedures which are documented through written transcription or thorough note-taking. Prospect's Documentary Processes structure the oral interactions of groups of practitioners who convene specifically for the purpose of exploring teachers' and children's learning, among them The Reflective Conversation, The Description of Children's Work, and The Staff Review of a Child. Many other teacher groups engage in similar activities. Wigginton and his staff members meet weekly to talk about their courses by sharing proposed and already-tried activities which others then critique and analyze. The Philadelphia Teachers Learning Cooperative and the Boston Women's Teachers' Group regularly convene to explore issues and practices across contexts by examining particular cases. Unlike teachers' journals and essays which may be completed by a teacher researcher writing alone, oral inquiry processes as a type of teacher research are by definition collaborative: the primary outcomes—the conjoined understandings of the participants—have immediate and obvious value.

An example of systematic intentional inquiry, Prospect's Documentary Processes are based on a phenomenological view of knowledge and learning; by participating in these experiences, teachers grapple with children's meanings as expressed in their projects and with the varied meanings that their colleagues find in these. An important part of the procedure is that a recorder keeps careful notes of each participant's insights which are used to create periodic summaries and statements of the organizing concepts perceived in the work at hand and in some cases added to school records. The result is often an unusually rich and complex rendering of patterns which invites rather than forecloses further interpretations.

In addition, when documentary records are preserved, teachers can return to the texts of their deliberations to "REsearch" their own knowledge and insights. These acquire additional significance over time as teachers confront new situations in their own classrooms and schools. Like the archive of children's work preserved at the Prospect Center, records of teachers' oral inquiry processes are potentially of great value for the broader community of teachers, teacher educators, and university researchers. Buchanan and a group of Philadelphia teachers (1988) are currently working toward this end by proposing the development of an urban archive of teachers' writing and oral inquiry as well as the children's work from which it stems. Buchanan makes an eloquent case for the need for an archive and essentially a case for teacher research:

> *Every day teachers' observations and reflections on the teaching process, on their students, and on educational issues are irretrievably lost because there is no provision for preserving them. Such materials are essential for shaping and recording the evolution of the profession. Similarly the day-to-day writing, art work and number work of students is rarely saved in a systematic manner. What children don't take home is often thrown away. Other than the presentation of test scores, there are few large-scale efforts to demonstrate what and how children are learning in school. (p. 2)*

> *The Archive will serve as a rich resource for teachers, researchers and other professionals who are interested in the long view of what is happening to children in our society. (p.1)*

Buchanan's proposal emanates from a decade of work with her colleagues and from her frustration about the relationship between academic research and teacher knowledge. As she points out, the systematic collection of teachers' inquiries and children's work will "give scholars an unobtrusive, 'inside view' of classrooms which is currently not available" (pp. 1-2) and which is, we believe, sorely needed.

Classroom Studies. Our final category, classroom studies, includes most of what others currently term "teacher research." Several volumes describing this work have recently been published (Bissex & Bullock, 1987; Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Mohr & MacLean, 1987; Myers, 1985). Classroom studies most closely resemble university-based research and are the type of teacher research best known to readers of *The Quarterly*. Classroom studies exemplify the potential of teacher research to reform classroom practice by prompting powerful intellectual critiques of assumptions, goals and strategies. Many demonstrate the recursiveness of the teacher research process wherein questions are continuously reformulated, methods are revised, and analysis is ongoing. The value of teachers' classroom studies is not necessarily self-evident to the academic research community although in many cases the issues addressed are the same as those addressed by university researchers. For example, teachers also address discrepancies between intended and enacted curricula; authority, power, and autonomy in writing classrooms; and the culture of classrooms as social constructions of students and teachers. We are suggesting that the evolving questions of teachers studying their own classrooms often indicate avenues of inquiry that traditional research may not have considered or found important.

Communities For Teacher Research

Participation in teacher research requires considerable effort by innovative and dedicated teachers to stay in their classrooms and at the same time carve out opportunities to inquire and reflect on their own practice. While university-based research occupies an unquestioned position at the center of the institution's mission, teacher research unfortunately struggles on the margins of K-12 schools. Many teacher-researcher groups operate only peripherally within, and some entirely outside of, school systems and sometimes represent teachers' resistance to the role of teacher as technician. Myers (1987) has argued persuasively for the institutionalization of teacher research. He cautions against adding teacher research to educational institutions as they now exist. Recently a few school districts have considered institutionalizing the role of teacher- researchers by establishing new positions that combine teaching and researching responsibilities: as lead teachers, teacher mentors, peer supervisors, or, as has been proposed in the Pittsburgh public school system, as researchers-in-residence who collect and manage data for the school principal and faculty. It is unclear at this time what the impact of innovations like these will be. It would be unfortunate, however, if they inadvertently buttressed the traditional association between gaining increased power and responsibility in the school system and abandoning the classroom.

Realistically the complex and extensive demands on teachers' time and attention place obvious limitations on what teachers can manage to do. The wry comments of Philadelphia Writing Project teacher Rayna Goldfarb illustrate this dilemma:

> *I finally determined why I felt such strong resistance to the notion of teacher as researcher. My view has always been that the primary purpose of a teacher is to TEACH. There are lessons to be prepared, papers to be read (the first draft), conferences to be held, papers to be graded (the final copy), exams to be designed and graded, report card grades to be calculated, questions to be answered, college recommendations to be written, essay contests to be supervised, monthly attendance reports to be calculated, students' personal problems to be attended to, lessons to be prepared for students who are in the hospital or who are going out on maternity, bulletin boards to be changed, journals to be read, and PA announcements, classroom disruptions, disciplines, IEP's, CEH 14's, and standardized exams to be endured. And I am not even one of those compulsively obsessed teachers who believes in devoting every waking hour to my teaching and my students. How can someone do research without neglecting her responsibilities to her students?*

Goldfarb's remarks remind us that much of what is involved in conducting systematic inquiry inside classrooms is outside of the range of activities normally expected of or rewarded in teaching. Supporting teacher research clearly involves dramatic structural and organizational changes. Agendas for teacher research and school restructuring clearly need to be linked. In order for teachers to begin to play a prominent role in identifying and studying important school and district issues, standard school routines and practices would have to be altered and power and decision-making distributed among teachers, specialists, and administrators.

In many school systems, however, teachers have not been encouraged to work together on voluntary, self-initiated projects or to speak out with authority about instructional, curricular, and policy issues. When groups of teachers have the opportunity to work together as highly professionalized teacher-researchers, they become increasingly articulate about issues of equity, hierarchy, and autonomy, and increasingly critical of the technocratic model that dominates much of school practice. The need for highly professionalized teachers is consonant with Aronowitz and Giroux's (1985) call for teachers as "transformative intellectuals" who have the potential to resist what Apple (1986) refers to as "deskilling" mandates and to change their own teaching practices. In a recent collection of case studies conducted by teachers of writing, editors Bissex and Bullock (1987) suggest that "by becoming researchers teachers take control over their classrooms and professional lives in ways that confound the traditional definition of teacher and offer proof that education can reform itself from within" (p. xi). In the same vein, they also argue that teacher research is a natural

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agent of change: "doing classroom research changes teachers and the teaching profession from the inside out, from the bottom up, through changes in teachers themselves. And therein lies the power" (p. 27). While we agree with the direction of these claims, we are concerned about school reform that depends primarily on the efforts of teachers without school restructuring. Because many features of school systems constrain bottom-up, inside-out reform, it seems unlikely that systems traditionally organized to facilitate top-down change will readily acknowledge and build upon the potential impact of teacher-initiated reforms. Furthermore, as teachers empower themselves by adopting a more public and authoritative stance on their own practice, they are more likely to create the contexts for their own students to be empowered as active learners. Ironically, and indeed unfortunately, many school systems are slow to realize the potent link between teacher research and enhanced student learning.

A variety of arrangements have been proposed to enable teachers to do research. These include: reduced loads, released time, paid overtime, or summer seminars or institutes in which teachers write and reflect about their teaching practices (Mohr & MacLean, 1987); collaborative networks, study groups, or research teams; opportunities to visit voluntarily the classrooms of teachers in other grade levels, subject areas, schools, and school districts; financial support for their research projects; and a variety of formal and informal channels for the dissemination of teachers' work. The most important factor in determining where and how these arrangements work is whether or not school systems allow teachers, on a voluntary basis, to participate in designing and revising these new structures.

In order for teachers to carry out the systematic and self-critical inquiry that teacher research entails, networks need to be established and forums created by teachers so that ongoing collaboration is possible. These networks begin to function as intellectual communities for teachers who, more typically, are isolated from one another. Two examples in which we are involved are PhilWP (The Philadelphia Writing Project, a school-university partnership and urban site of the National Writing Project at the University of Pennsylvania) and Project START ("Student Teachers as Researching Teachers," a school-university collaborative teacher education program). Both involve groups of experienced and beginning teachers who meet regularly to read, write, problem-solve, and particularly, to ask each other a wide range of questions about theory and practice.

In PhilWP, teachers engage in several forms of teacher research. Teachers bring their journals and students' writing collected over time to monthly meetings where they conduct staff reviews, frame and reframe their questions, and reflect on children's work. So far four collections of teacher essays, entitled *Work in Progress*, include informal analyses of classroom practice, adaptations of oral presentations, proposals for curriculum revision, and commentaries on issues in teachers' work lives. The cross-visitation program, invented and designed by project teachers, makes it possible during the school day for teachers to visit, be visited by, and consult with other teachers not in the project. Teachers study collaboratively the range and variation of writing that occurs across classrooms and schools. A smaller research group is documenting the evolution of the cross-visitation program as a model of collegial learning and staff development.

In Project START experienced teachers, student teachers, and teacher educators work together in three settings which support teacher research—weekly in-school meetings of teacher-researcher teams composed of three to four student teachers, their cooperating teachers, and one university supervisor, monthly meetings at the university of all the teacher research teams, and the graduate course in which these student teachers are concurrently enrolled. These three settings provide the contexts in which participants study learning and teaching in single classrooms from their three perspectives and make comparisons across classrooms and grade levels as well as across urban and suburban, independent and public, and small and large schools. Student teachers, cooperating teachers and supervisors also keep dialogue journals on theoretical as well as practical issues. Through weekly and monthly meetings they inquire into ways to observe children, form classroom communities, and ask questions about and plan for language and literacy development in the classroom.

* * *

Although we are arguing that teacher research constitutes a legitimate arena of formal knowledge about teaching, its status and value have yet to be determined by school-based teachers, the interpretive community for whom it is primarily intended. Just as university researchers have evolved a complex set of criteria and standards for judging the quality and contribution of research in the academic community, teachers over time will develop a similarly complex set of standards for evaluating the research generated in and for their community.

We are not suggesting that teacher research ought to be the entire agenda for the enhanced professionalization of teaching. There are obviously complex problems involved even in calling for teacher research. Certainly, as Myers (1985) rightly argues, "telling teachers they should do teacher research is...an inadequate way to begin" (p. 126). To encourage teacher research, we must first address incentives for

teachers, the creation and maintenance of supportive networks, the reform of rigid organizational patterns in schools, and the hierarchical power relationships that characterize most of schooling. Nor are we arguing that teacher research ought to occupy a privileged position in relation to research on teaching in general. To resolve the problematic relationship between academic research and teacher research it will be necessary to confront directly controversial issues of voice, power, ownership, status and role in the broad educational community. If school and university researchers begin to address these problems, perhaps the issues dividing research on teaching and teacher research will become instead catalysts to enhance research in both communities.

Through their research, teachers can contribute to the critique and revision of existing theory by describing discrepant and paradigmatic cases as well as providing data that grounds or moves toward alternative theories. What teachers bring will alter, and not just add to, what is known about teaching. As the body of teacher research accumulates, it will undoubtedly prompt reexamination of current assumptions about learners, language and classroom processes.

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Susan Lytle is Director of the Philadelphia Writing Project. Marilyn Cochran-Smith is Director of Project START. Both are on the faculty of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

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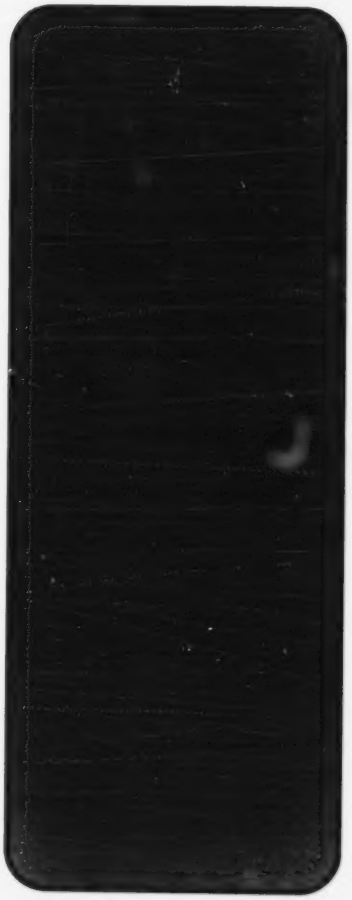
Sarah Warshauer Freedman

Exchanging Writing, Exchanging Cultures



Cool J., a thoughtful and articulate ninth-grade boy tracked in a very low level English class in the San Francisco Bay Area, after a year of being involved in a cross-cultural exchange of writing between his class and a class in London, reveals in an interview, "It's really new and fun to write to an audience, you know, not just write to your teacher. Good experience I guess." Cool J. (he chose the pen name) is in one of four urban inner-city classes in the Bay Area paired with four similar classes in London. These eight classes exchanged writing throughout the 1987-88 school year and are part of an in-depth cross-cultural study of the teaching and learning of writing in the United Kingdom and the United States.

The reports of these writing exchanges show how students, many of whom have a history of failure in school, through writing in a personally meaningful and engaging school context, can begin to change their status in school. The writing exchanges demonstrate that to help these young adolescents succeed, schools must make radical changes, changes that reach far beyond what the current educational reform movement is considering. Most important, the students must be allowed to write honestly, and, through their writing, to come to terms with their personal lives—even when those lives are sometimes not so pretty, when they include problems dealing with drug abuse in their neighborhoods, the mental illness of a parent, the ravages of family alcoholism, the traumas of teenage pregnancy. The exchanges are designed not only to allow but to encourage students to bring their lives and their language into the school context before an audience of peers and teachers who take them, their experiences, and their writing seriously. As the

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Exchanging Writing, Exchanging Cultures

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students' lives and experiences are valued by others, they begin to value themselves—and to see how writing and literacy fit into their lives. They build social connections to writing; and on this firm base, their academic writing can grow and develop.

Since writing is exchanged between students in the United States and the United Kingdom, the exchanges also allow us to compare the teaching and learning of writing in the two countries. Through earlier U.S. and U.K. national surveys of highly successful teachers and their students at the secondary level, we have found a number of critical differences in how students are viewed by their teachers and how they learn. First, teachers in the U.K. stress imaginative writing while teachers in the U.S. stress critical thinking. Second, U.K. teachers think it more important to attend to the needs of individual learners than U.S. teachers, while U.S. teachers are more inclined to expend their energies developing the curriculum than are their U.K. counterparts. In both countries teachers focus on their students' writing and learning processes; at the secondary level their students focus on their written products and the grades they receive.

The U.K. emphasis on the individual learner and the concomitant value placed on the imagination provide a firm educational base for meeting the needs of a diverse student body. Irene Robertson, one of the U.K. teachers in the exchange project, sent some ironic pieces from her students to the U.S. in which she shows both how she admits her students' personal lives into her classroom and how she treats her students seriously, as imaginative individuals who do not all fit into the cultural mainstream. Her students have described their neighborhood in Tottenham, which one would imagine from reading the U.K. popular press is virtually a black ghetto where the young are lawless, the police are brutal, and there is constant racial conflict. That picture is a gross distortion, but the district does have many problems and the students know it. Says Robertson:

I know that one of the things that students these days feel they have to do, when they talk about Tottenham, talk about...living in Tottenham, is...they have to try to distance themselves, from...everybody's stereotypes of that area, and I think irony enables them to distance themselves, without...without them becoming totally hostile to it, and that's important, because after all it is the place where they're going to go on living, and I was quite delighted with a lot...a lot of their remarks about the area, and I just thought that was a different way of writing. It wasn't just pleasant chat about "Here am I, and this is who I am, and this is what I do." It was actually offering a discourse on a different level. (Interview, March 13, 1989)

As they work with the exchanges, the U.S. teachers provide examples of how individual and diverse students can be similarly valued in an American educational context. Much of the writing these U.S. teachers allow and even encourage would be banned in traditional classrooms. However, the further these teachers push toward making radical departures from standard practice that are presupposed by the exchange, the more likely their students are to grow academically, to find personal and social connections to writing and ultimately to learning.

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Joan Cone and Susan Reed from the U.S., and Kate Chapman from the U.K., write about their own and their students' experiences being part of an audience exchange. Cone teaches English at El Cerrito High School in El Cerrito, California, which serves ethnically diverse students from both middle class and low income urban neighborhoods. Her five-course teaching load includes two sections of twelfth-grade Advanced Placement English, one tenth-grade honors class, and two ninth-grade remedial classes, one of which participated in the audience exchange project. Cone became involved in the second year of the exchange project and participated in the project for one year.

Reed teaches at De Anza High School, located in a low income area on the outskirts of Richmond, California. She, too, teaches five classes a day—two basic ninth-grade writing classes, two eleventh-grade honors classes, and one class for The Write Team, a cadre of writing coaches, juniors and seniors who guide and assist freshman writers. It was one of the basic ninth-grade writing classes that participated in the exchange project. Like Cone, Reed joined the exchange project in its second year and participated for one year.

Chapman teaches at Northumberland Park School in London, a school well-known for its strong English department. Northumberland Park is located in the Tottenham district of the London borough of Haringey, and many of the students' parents work locally in factories, offices, and shops. Chapman participated in our project for two years. In the second year of the project she was teaching seven classes. Because in the U.K. classes do not meet every day, this load was equivalent to a five-course load in the U.S. In addition to teaching, Chapman was also, at the time of the exchange, acting deputy head of her English department, a position entailing many administrative duties.

Sarah Warshauer Freedman is a Professor of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. She is Director of the Center for the Study of Writing.

Joan Cone

Real Voices for Real Audiences

For all of my work with response groups and my notes about "Show don't tell" and "Please be more specific" and "Why did the boy make you afraid?" I had met with little success in getting my students to develop their ideas thoroughly, to describe characters and events fully, to explain their feelings exactly—in short, to write with a sense of audience. Occasionally their personal narratives would come alive with colorful detail, but for the most part they wrote not for an interested reader but for a mistake-finder who red-pencilled misspelled words, concentrated on penmanship and punctuation, and checked off assignments. Because of that perception of the teacher-as-audience, my students played it safe: they wrote as little as possible and as neatly as they could; they concerned themselves with correct headings, length of paper, and titles; and they wrote what they thought I wanted them to say. When Sarah Freedman asked me to join her audience exchange project, I saw opportunities for changing my students' perception of audience as well as for getting to know a group of students in a foreign country.

For the project I asked my students to do a focused free writing on what they knew about England and how they felt about writing to students there, hoping that writing would weaken their resistance and get them involved. They knew that "England is a country in Europe" (Oben) [all student names are the pseudonyms that they chose to use for the exchange] "whose citizens speak the same language as us" (Geya) but who "drive on the opposite side of the road" (Run). They also knew that "England is a very pretty place to see and famous for their Big Ben" (Ice T); that "Every year two of our NFL football teams go to England and they have a big game and they love it" (Easy E); and that "Boy George is from London" (Rex). As far as their feelings about making contact with English students, they were mostly hesitant: "I feel like I'm being forced to write to them" (Ice T);" I can't really say how I feel about writing ... because I don't know them and I never saw them before" (Rex); "I don't feel excited because I don't really want them to know a lot about me" (Elaine); "I guess I feel good about it. I just wouldn't tell a person who I don't know anything personal "(Cool J).

Not entirely trustful of the exchange project, not knowing the British students, and being especially careful of their handwriting and spelling, the students in my class wrote letters that were for the most part stiff, brief, and formulaic;" My name is Bill. I am 17 years old. This is my third year of high school. I play no sports at this school. In my spare time I like to go to parties, concerts, and bowling. My hobbies are trains"; "My name is Elaine Jackson. I am fourteen years old. I was born June 19, 1973, at Martinez Hospital. I have one brother and two sisters. My brother's name is Edward. My sisters' names are Stacey and Susan"; "Hi. My name is Rex. I am 15 years of age and I go to El Cerrito High School in the State of California."

When the first letters arrived from England, the excitement began. We read the letters at the first of the period and suggested that since there weren't enough letters to go around, those who got a letter should read it silently first and then aloud to the class. I handed out the letters randomly. "Here's one from Louise. Who wants to read it?" "Garney?" "Marthy?" "Here's one from someone named Titch—look at her pretty writing." Run wanted that letter, artistic with its brown ink and large calligraphic letters. As he read, he began to smile and then to share his letter with the students around him. With that letter, the success of the exchange was born. Titch's voice shouted out —"Hi to all you funky def people in 9th grade, it's Titch"—and took control of not just Run's but a number of other boys' hearts in Room 606 as well.

Because of that perception of the teacher-as-audience, my students played it safe: they wrote as little as possible and as neatly as they could; they concerned themselves with correct headings, length of paper, and titles; and they wrote what they thought I wanted them to say.

Titch was not the only Burlington-Danes student my students felt they knew after the first letter. There were others—like Marisa who had an unkind word to say about everyone in her class and Garney who wrote moving descriptions of her family and her religion and Ream who LOVED American television shows, looked just like BRUCE WILLIS, and used three exclamation marks and four capitalized words per sentence. There were Louise and Tootsie and Ahmed. These were the students my students talked about and whose letters they read and reread on the bulletin board. These were the students my students wanted to emulate, even to the point of using their language—"mum," "maths," and "tuck" and other Britishisms they had picked up from movies and television comedy routines. These were the students who were real to my students and me, real because we could hear their voices in their writing.

A few days later when we started work on our first official exchange paper there was no resistance. After

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Real Voices for Real Audiences

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discussing general topics to include in an autobiography, my students went to the computers and began composing.

One problem I had with the autobiography assignment was that my students had a hard time addressing a general audience. When they did not feel that their autobiography–writing voices allowed them to speak to the Burlington–Danes students effectively, they switched to their letter–writing voices. "We stay in Easter Hill but, as I told you awhile back, I stay with my grandmother because she is afraid" (Short T). "Now let me tell you a little about what I like to do on weekends and when we don't have school" (Elaine). "I really enjoy going to El Cerrito High School. But sometimes it can be a real p— in the a—. You know what I was going to say" (Rex).

At first I was frustrated with their switch from addressing a general audience to a specific audience but decided that if I insisted that they stop speaking directly to the students in England or to one student in particular, I would be interfering with their developing awareness of voice, so I stepped back.

Over the course of the year my students sent more writing than they received. Occasionally they complained about the imbalance—"I waited for you guys to write us back, but you never did so I decided to write to you"—but for the most part, they accepted the fact that they were sending more pieces and writing longer pieces than the British students. The disparity in frequency and length did not dampen my students' interest in the exchange project. Once their initial reticence had disappeared, they wrote openly and enthusiastically to their British counterparts. In her April 19th letter, Geya wrote, "I was sitting in my classroom wondering when your class was going to write again. I was hoping to get a letter or something... I guess I will start by telling you about my school life. Everyone at school that knows me says I'm a nerd. The reason for that is because I like to write. Whenever I'm supposed to write a paragraph I don't; I write a page. Everyone tells me that I wrote a book and that really makes me angry." Although my students loved reading the work of the British students and getting to know them through their writing, they did not look upon the exchange as a dialogue. They talked about the British writers and discussed their personalities and writings, but never once initiated writing a response to a particular piece of writing. My students viewed the exchange as a performance opportunity for which the British students served as audience, an audience that was to be courted and moved and entertained.

This summer as I reread my students' papers I was moved by two significant changes in their writing, changes that I think are directly attributable to our participation in the audience exchange project: their writing became longer and more detailed and it took on a clear personal voice.

As the year went along my students stopped playing it safe with short, perfunctory essays that filled space but revealed little about what they knew and felt. Gone, for example, were Cool J's skeletal paragraphs filled with unelaborated statements. In the first weeks of the school year he wrote, "I am 14 years old. I was born at Kaiser Permanente in Oakland, California. I live with both my parents. My father is a minister." In his autobiography, directed toward his British audience, he wrote, "My brother's name is Carter Lee Freeman. He got his middle name from my father. My brother is 22 years old. He is the best basketball player in the world. He is a senior at Sacramento State University and the starting guard on the basketball team. I hope he is good enough to play pro–basketball. I think he is, but I am not a pro coach."

Over the course of the year their personal narratives doubled in length. On September 14, Geya wrote a personal narrative, "Getting Even," of 176 words. In February her personal narrative on an impetuous deed was 473 words long. The first story Ice T wrote contained 140 words and nine paragraphs—one sentence per paragraph. His February personal narrative had 224 words and two well–developed paragraphs.

My students also responded in detail to the Burlington–Danes students' essays on serious topics such as abortion and arranged marriages. One British student's paper on cocaine elicited page–long reactions from several of my students who shared their concerns as well as their experiences with drugs.

The more they wrote the more comfortable they became in letting their personalities come through in their work. Several students took on nicknames and wrote rap songs for the students in England. Run went from "Hi. My name is Run. I am 15 years old," to "When I was born I was def as can be/ I was like a person on Dynasty/ Soon I reached my first day of school/ And all sucker kids I did rule/ Years flew by I began to grow/ To the fresh young rapper that you now know..."

Their narratives, too, began to have a personal voice. "One day while playing strike–out with my cousin Worm, I broke a window. This is how it happened. We were playing in the church parking lot which is shaped like a square or a box. There is a house right in back of the lot where we bat. And it just so happened that a window is right behind the fence. We had played there over a hundred times and never had any problem. Until that day..."

And eventually their expository writing took on a personal voice. In an essay on the effects of drugs on society, B-Y, for example, referred to an article he had read about a drug–related crime in the local community, interweaving a narrative account of this crime into his exposition: "I read in the newspaper a few months back about a lady who was pregnant

with twins. She gave birth to one and left it in the toilet wrapped up in paper towels, and she went into the front room to finish smoking coke. Then she went into the bathroom again to give birth to the other baby. After she gave birth, she left it on the bathroom floor. She didn't call the police or ambulance until she started losing consciousness. When the police got there the babies were dead. The mother was taken to the hospital and when she was well she was taken to jail. That is a damned shame."

In the beginning my students thought of the British students as a group of critical readers, much like the teachers they had been writing for. Easy E spoke for the class when he wrote, "When Mrs. Cone first told the class that we would be writing to kids in England I didn't really care. I just thought Mrs. Cone was making up another assignment but I was wrong." When my students read Titch and her classmates' letters of introduction, they met a new kind of audience, a group of readers who spoke in a lively language and who wanted to get acquainted with them through writing. The Burlington–Danes audience provided my students with a performance opportunity they had not met before in school writing. Once they saw that writing could provide a stage for them to perform on, that writing made them like actors showing off—showing off their ideas and their experiences and their language—they changed. They began with their letter voices but as the year went along they broadened their range, handling narrative voice and exposition. And they used their voices to engage their audience, to make their readers understand their favorite holidays, their impetuosity, their playfulness, their history, their literary perceptions, their hurts, their romances, their joy at improving as writers this year. The Burlington–Danes students heard them and applauded. So did I.

Susan Reed

London Calling

"London?"

"Who?"

I had their attention. My Period 6 students were going to write to students in London all year long as part of a project of the Center for the Study of Writing at U.C. Berkeley: a U.S.-U.K. audience exchange project involving a handful of Bay Area classes and London area classes. Researchers would study student writing in both settings. My ninth graders at De Anza High School in Richmond, California, would write to a fourth form class at Gladesmore School in Tottenham, London.

Who are my students? Urban kids of many colors in a school where racial and ethnic minorities make a majority. They are 14, 15, and 16 year olds (some have taken and failed English 1 before). Many have attendance problems, especially in classes after lunch. Some come in from out back where, at lunch, the stoners live. Some have been mainstreamed from E.S.L. classes. Some are special education students who are mainstreamed to this basic English class. All of these students are swimmers in the pool of low stanine kids we teach in tracked sections in my district.

They were wary right from the start when I passed out the University of California parental permission forms. They needed a signature to be human subjects of a research study. "Human subject? Study *my* writing?"

Researchers, including Sarah Freedman from U.C. Berkeley ("that Sarah girl," as one of my students referred to her in her log) and Alex McLeod from the University of London, were in the room often enough to keep the students aware of their human subject status. Students were observed, interviewed and taped. Other visitors dropped by, including a reporter and photographer from the local newspaper.

But as my class began to exchange writing with the U.K. class, they began to perceive themselves as having a job to do. I mean, they had an audience over there of real kids who needed straightening out on quite a few things, like the "in" musical groups in the U.S. and the number of TV channels most of us receive. For some reason students over there believed that we Americans received only four channels. My students wrote about jammed lockers and short lunch periods at De Anza. They explained what it means to graduate from an American high school. They described Bay Area attractions such as the streets of Berkeley, the Santa Cruz Boardwalk, and the San Pablo Reservoir. They shared experiences: what it is like to live with an alcoholic father, what it feels like to run away from home and to come home again. Life's ups and downs. They got involved and they had something to say.

Early in the year, working in groups was a new idea for most of them, accustomed as they were to solo and remedial drill work. Any social activity was associated in their minds with losing points. The class began getting regular help in running response groups from the Write Team, a group of peer writing coaches we have at De Anza. These coaches gave the writers positive feedback on "how it sounds" rather than "what you should fix." These coaches helped them get used to working

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London Calling

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together and to writing for an audience besides their teacher. Talking became necessary rather than subversive; revising became something more than recopying.

A general spirit of comraderie developed in the room. I noted in my own log as early as November, "Never have I had a class like this one that lingers over what the bell just ended. They left the room still talking about their writing."

My role in the classroom began to change early in the year. I wasn't chief evaluator any more; I was a coach. This class wasn't writing to my assignments for a grade I gave them. Instead, I was coaching them to write for a real audience outside the classroom. I took roll, gave credit for drafts and finished pieces, talked with students about their drafts. I provided them with models of different kinds of writing they might try and helped them find proofreaders for one another's work (resisting the urge to take over their pieces and "fix" them myself so that London wouldn't see any deficiencies).

The atmosphere in the room changed so dramatically that the contracts I had always used in low stanine classes became an embarrassment to me. Assigning points for such behavior as bringing a pencil or having a positive attitude or working attentively all period just became irrelevant and insulting.

I even stopped putting grades on individual finished pieces of writing and nobody seemed to notice. As long as I kept giving credit for process and conferring regularly with them about how their work was going, grades on final products were unimportant; finishing a piece and mailing it off was what mattered. Getting a response didn't even seem to be essential since their interest survived a long silence from England during a teachers' strike at Gladesmore.

Aside from the computer hook-up between De Anza and Gladesmore, the formal exchange of writing is over this year; grant monies have run out; data need to be studied and published. What have I learned from the experience of being a teacher involved in this study?

I've learned collaboration between a university and a public high school is a gift to the teachers and to the students involved. As the university researchers gathered information about the audience exchange, we benefitted. No question. The exchange project was the key to changing roles in my classroom. My students wrote to a real audience, and I had the chance to be a learner in their midst rather than a teacher in front.

I feel so strongly about what we accomplished together last year that I asked to keep the same group of students again for another year. Most of my students, except for those who were repeaters, are back again this year in English 2. They are no longer tracked as basic or remedial or low stanine this year. Last year's exchange group has been joined this year by several students who have never been labelled "underachieving" as well as by three more mainstreamed special ed students; the course now is a regular English 2 section—actually 2p (for general college prep). Now, at least, students wishing to apply to college will receive English credit for the course, not the case for the low stanine courses. Because of the way the class now runs—as a writing workshop—I offer help as needed and work with each student to set individual goals for the course.

This year, with the structure for the exchange already set in place, we'll ask more questions ourselves, take a closer look at what is happening in our own room.

I've collected evidence of what I've always known: people rise to what is expected of them. Rather than follow my students around with talk of making up their deficiencies and their mistakes and their missing assignments, I know I can give them something real to do—like tell somebody else what they think about their world. This year we will continue to exchange computer messages with Gladesmore. Also, without University support, we will write to students in another London class at Morpeth School in Bethnal Green. My students can keep folders of their own finished work—photocopies of writing actually sent to somebody along with collections of notes and drafts that led to that writing. They can see for themselves what they've done and celebrate it.

I know that this year my students and I will keep changing and looking at the changes. Instead of collecting data for somebody else to consider and evaluate later, we will be "learner–researchers" ourselves, not human subjects. Why miss an opportunity to learn more about our own learning? The researcher role suits my students. They all kept London logs last year so they learned to reflect on what was happening in their own writing. They were also able to make some rather astute observations about the exchange writing. One time we received what seemed to be a classroom assignment: some impersonal descriptions of Tottenham landmarks with accompanying photographs. Several of my students asked, "Why aren't they writing to us?" "Who are these for?"

This year, with the structure for the exchange already set in place, we'll ask more questions ourselves, take a closer look at what is happening in our own room. Active learning is what people call it these days. How do models help with

writing? How do response partners help with revision? How are we changing as writers? I can tackle questions like these in my own log and do my own teacher research. My students can address the same issues in their logs and in self–evaluations as they finish final drafts and as they come to the end of each quarter.

Thinking about Period 6 reminds me of a little Robert Frost poem:

We dance round in a ring and suppose,
But the Secret sits in the middle and knows.

After a year of sitting among my students in the middle of my classroom as a research participant and as a coach, I'm beginning to know that the secret *is* sitting in the middle after all.

Kate Chapman

The Response Factor

Knowing exactly who is going to be reading your work is a crucial factor in determining your attitude towards it. When we write we are putting ourselves on the line. Judge it harshly and our self–esteem takes a blow. I see this all the time as a teacher. My students identify their sense of self with their work. Their developing confidence as learners is nurtured by an understanding, supportive audience which is interested primarily in the content of what is said, read or written. I regularly read my tutor group's course folders and books. There, I often see many teachers' responses to students' work and they are basically critical elaborations of the mistakes made in achieving accepted notions of literacy and numeracy. Many of the students I teach suffer from having low opinions of themselves and of their work. This is a problem which is surely reinforced by insensitive responses from the readers of their writing. In the second year of the Exchange Project my aims were similar to those in the first year but now I also wanted the students to be aware of the importance for writers of having the content of writing sensitively validated (for themselves and for others). I felt that this could provide further motivation for more active involvement in writing as a real communication. This is something, I think, which does not happen enough in schools.

Before both classes began writing to the American students, many expressed fears about how their work would be received. They worried that they would feel shamed and hurt if the Americans laughed or were too critical. Daniel made this very clear replying to a question about why he was anxious: *I thought the students might laugh at my work and be jokey about it.*

Interestingly enough this anxiety is remembered by Daniel who was very keen to tell his partners that he took their work very seriously. In fact he opens his response letter to Blizwell with the sentence, *I didn't laugh at your work because I thought it was very very good and very detailed like the other piece of work I read by your best friend JRW.*

Many expressed fears about being humiliated by the fact that the American students might find what they had to say laughable. There was an initial reaction from both classes that they had to prove their worth. Veronica wrote in response to the question, How does this writing compare with other writing that you do in school? *It would have more detail in the American students' work because they live in a different state to us so we try to impress them by writing neater and with more effect into our work.*

Receiving the first pieces of work caused many sighs of relief as my students saw that the work was sent by ordinary children. Not special. Not mini–teachers, but individuals writing about their lives in similar ways ...

It was now important to be understood. Now there was a real reason to explain things properly and to use the detail required for "effective" communication. This ranged widely from long class projects to informal letters and the more formalized "response" letters which I set up after the class had received much of the Americans' writing. These included personal descriptions of childhood accidents, hairstyles, knowledge about car mechanics, and so on. Aspects of their lives which mattered to them. For Christos, "getting the explanation right" created two pages of writing on A4 paper which described how to play cricket (a creditable attempt which I understood). The classes were genuinely interested in each other and through their writing they were able to build up an informative dialogue. The clarity and style of writing was thus rendered important because it was their only method of communication.

The need to "perform" had been transformed from an outside pressure to "measure up" to a personal desire to involve, interest, inform, entertain, manipulate and "move." For example, Daniel wanted to ... *make them afraid (in his description of a Russian satellite which was apparently out of control) ... of what was happening and where it might land.*

For others the sheer pleasure of being able to utilize their "expertise" in telling others about their interests was an

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The Response Factor

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important aspect of the project; e.g., Oben, a reluctant writer, now had the opportunity to write about his obsession, snakes, which he did in a thorough manner, even including a part of one of his snake's shedded skin in his work.

Through the work which was swapped and the letters which were exchanged, the American students gradually became "real." Some students became quite emotionally involved and were able to empathize strongly (empathy being a quality we value in a response to a text). This is clearly evidenced in Jane's response to the autobiography she read, ... *But when I got to the part when I found out one of her cats had died I didn't laugh at all. I felt quite sad and I guess Kitty felt that was as well let alone lonely.*

The developing "friendships" meant that as the year progressed the students demanded more say in what was written. They realized that they were the experts in deciding what their audience might like to read.

The Response Letters

After we had received the American students' autobiographies, spooky stories, and some personal letters, I felt the class was in a good position to respond directly to the writing. They'd already sent their own autobiographies and other more informal letters. I wanted to develop their responses further. I decided to talk through with them ways of responding which showed the recipient that their work had been read and thought about as well. I wanted to encourage my students to personally relate to the writing. I felt it was important for them to take another student's writing seriously in this way. I devised a worksheet to help them structure their ideas. I wanted the writing to be read thoroughly—not just skimmed, or just admired for the decorations, photographs or drawings, which could happen if there was no responsibility to respond—and then explore the writing as text, including picking out sections to comment on and discuss. I also encouraged them to include ideas which the writing evoked for them. The results are relaxed and successfully integrate response with reflection. For example, Jason's letter opens, *To Micky. I read your Autobiography and enjoyed it. I can see you like making models. I have quite a few. I only make Planes or Helicopters. I have a big model of Concorde and have seen both Concordes at Heathrow airport. The best part I liked of your Autobiography was about Halloween. I think it was real good, have you seen the film Halloween 1 and 2. On Halloween in England some of us go trick or treat but we don't dress up alot like you do.* Stavros writes at length about the sections he likes in Jenny's spooky story and winds up by saying, *I can't understand why you would never walk on 33 Street again, not even for a million dollars, but if that was me I do it for half a million dollars.* A shy student who hardly ever speaks to the girls in his class, he finds courage through writing to be quite personal with a girl he's never met. At the end of his response letter he writes, *I can see that you like hearts a very lot because you got hearts on you at the front of your Autobiograpy and you was wearing a heart jumper and on your response letter at the top.*

The developing "friendships" meant that as the year progressed the students demanded more say in what was written. They realized that they were the experts in deciding what their audience might like to read.

The students responded carefully to the details which struck them as particularly interesting. Farah was very clear about what she liked about Andy's story. *We got your spooky tales stories and I found yours good. At least in the end Cindy, Brenda and Liz didn't get killed, like in some of the stories my friends got! ... I liked the way Brenda turned out not to be such a scaredy–cat after all. And they turned that old man over to the cops.* Whilst James was particularly struck by the luxury of having a whole house to yourself on a Sunday morning. *I like the most ... your typical Sunday with your mum and dad waking up at 1:00 p.m. and you having the house to yourself would be nice for me. But my mum and dad get up at 9:00 a.m. then my brother who is 5 years older than me gets up at 8:00 a.m. so I never have the house for myself, so I go out with my brother for a game of snooker.*

In my journal I noted that *The letters were very friendly, they've really got the idea of being a sympathetic audience, e.g. Attila, 'I'll try not to be insulting—I'll try and put it a better way.' The letters are relaxed and they are responding very much as if they were their friends.*

We had discussed as a class the importance of being sympathetic to each other's work and about how you can help to build confidence. In fact many of the students had begun to work much more collaboratively, helping one another with drafting and ideas, and they appreciated the value of this. These letters reveal their sensitivity to the other students as learners. They had connected their own feelings of insecurity about writing outside themselves to realize that others might feel the same way too. They had received letters where the students had been enthusiastic about their work, responding positively to what they had written, and they had understood the importance of that support and encouragement for themselves. Jane writes openly about what she was trying to do in her response letter. *In my responses ... I was trying to help by*

saying how interesting it was. How much I enjoyed reading it. I think I made Kitty more confident about writing and drawing because I don't think she was too sure. To be quite honest I wasn't really sure of what I was writing but Kitty made me feel really confident about my work.

I feel that my students' progress as developing writers went hand–in–hand with a developing confidence in themselves as individuals who had something to say. Far from finding humiliation and rejection from their audience, they found encouragement and acceptance. In return they offered similar nurturing. All this is a far cry from the usual red-inked corrective treatment of students' writing.

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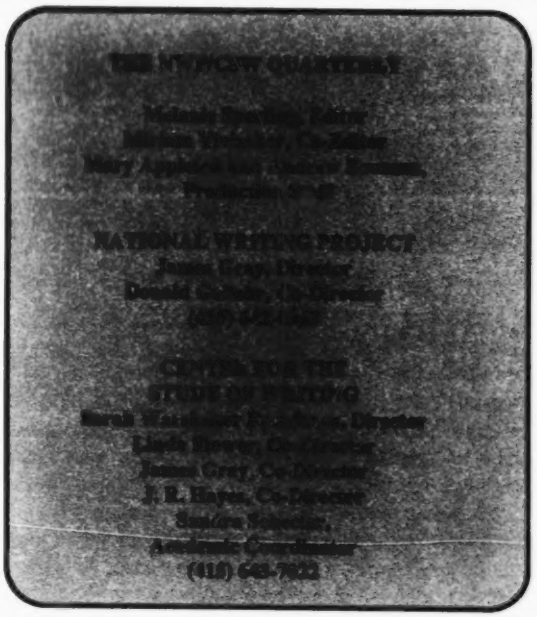

Editor's Note

Because this issue of The Quarterly *reaches you as the summer months begin their warm and lazy unfolding, I am devoting this space to weaving some patterns of summertime reading, connecting the articles in this issue to other reading that seems to me to go well with them, making the audacious assumption that summer gives us time for stretching our reading hours in ways that they will not stretch during the academic year.*

We begin with Sarah Warshauer Freedman's description of the writing exchange that she and Alex McLeod have been orchestrating between classrooms in the U.S. and the U.K., adding the voices of three of the teachers involved in this exchange, Joan Cone, Susan Reed, and Kate Chapman. Survey information revealing what goes on in classrooms in both countries is reported in National Surveys of Successful Teachers of Writing and Their Students: The United Kingdom and the United States *(CSW Technical Report No. 14) by Freedman and McLeod. This study extends Freedman's earlier look at writing instruction in U.S. schools, described in* Response to Student Writing *(NCTE, 1987).*

Angus Dunstan writes in "Building a Literate Community" about an advanced Summer Literature Institute at U.C. Santa Barbara. A companion to Dunstan's article is Marjorie Roemer's "Literate Cultures: Multi-Voiced Classrooms" (The Quarterly *11, 1) in which Roemer, like Dunstan, discusses the destabilizing implications of shifting pedagogy from traditions that have driven literary study for countless decades. Illustrating the ideas discussed by Dunstan and Roemer, Valerie Hobbs shows in "Collective Survival: Using Question Journals in the Classroom"* (The Quarterly, *10, 4*) *what it's like to lead a university literature course in which traditional approaches are eschewed.*

In "Electronic Writing: The Autobiography of a Collaborative Adventure," Jane Zeni Flinn writes about composing collaboratively on the computer, creating a text-on-text as she shows us the collaborating process, the collaborated-on text that the process produced, and an interwoven narrative by which she muses on both process and product. That a single technology encouraged this multi-layered composing is cause for amazement. A different kind of account of the amazing possibilities of this growing technology is Glynda Hull's essay, "Literacy, Technology, and the Underprepared: Notes Toward a Framework for Action" (The Quarterly *10, 3).*

Two book reviews round out this issue of The Quarterly. *Art Peterson reviews Toby Fulwiler's* The Journal Book *and Jerry Herman reviews William Zinsser's* Writing to Learn, *both worthwhile additions to any summer reading list.*

From Berkeley and The Quarterly *office, we wish you happy reading and a fruitful summer.* --*M.S.*

Angus Dunstan

Building a Literate Community: Report from an NEH Literature Institute for Teachers

The South Coast Writing Project at U.C. Santa Barbara recently received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to conduct a Literature Institute for Teachers (LIT). The idea was to bring together experienced classroom teachers from all grade levels (K-College) and distinguished literary scholars to explore the theory and practice of teaching literature. We demonstrated successful classroom strategies, wrote responses to primary texts and to literary theory, examined our own reading practices as we tackled several canonical texts (*The Tempest*, *Paradise Lost*, and *Walden*), and considered the implications of recent developments in literary theory for curriculum and pedagogy. We also looked for ways in which a process-oriented approach to writing instruction might be adapted to the teaching of literature. We arrived at a set of working principles to guide our teaching practice, principles which overturned some of our most ingrained and strongly held convictions.

LIT is not yet over. We continue to meet regularly, to read and write together, and to practice our new principles in the laboratory of the classroom. I offer these working principles here in the context of the new California English Language Arts Framework which also calls for a radical rethinking of traditional instruction in reading and literature.

This emphasis on meaning-making does not imply that literary history and literary criticism have no place in the teaching of literature. It does suggest that they have occupied center stage in literature classrooms for too long...

Teach Reading as a Meaning-Making Activity

We begin with the assertion that literary knowledge is not so much a body of facts as a procedure for making meaning. While it is true that a literate person may indeed know all the classical allusions in a poem like "The Waste Land," it is more important that she know how to go about figuring them out, confident that her curiosity is the mark of a sensitive reader rather than evidence of her ignorance. Teaching literature, then, becomes less a matter of passing on the received wisdom of a discipline and more a matter of initiating students into the language and processes of that discipline. It is the difference between teaching about themes, imagery and symbolism as if these were literary facts to be memorized ("a rose means love"), and focusing attention on how to use these terms to address some of the interpretive questions engaged readers raise. This emphasis on meaning-making does not imply that literary history and literary criticism have no place in the teaching of literature. It does suggest that they have occupied center stage in literature classrooms for too long, leaving many students convinced that our literary heritage is inaccessible to them unless they have the service of an "expert."

No single issue addressed in LIT caused greater problems, both at the theoretical level and at the level of personal response, than the changed locus of classroom authority which this view of meaning implies. If teaching literature involves us in acts of meaning-making, the teacher no longer necessarily occupies her former privileged position as arbiter of meaning. If the meaning and significance of literary texts is to be found neither in some Platonic sphere nor in the notes of critics and scholars but in transactions which new readers make with texts, then the classroom has to become a place where students are free to make those transactions, unhin-

dered by the sense that the teacher has the correct interpretation. Reading then becomes a potentially liberating activity, requiring conversation and negotiation and carrying the possibility of discovery. As long as meaning is thought to reside primarily in texts and secondarily in the notes of teachers and critics, as many teachers still seem to believe, it can be appropriated by "experts" and passed on, in a more or less benevolently despotic fashion, to students. But when our definition of meaning changes from "something apprehended" to "the result of a transaction made new each time a text is encountered," the role of the teacher has to change, and with it the traditional role of student as passive receiver of information.

Create a Literate Community In Which Such Meaning-Making Can Occur

Many classrooms are not literate communities at all but knowledge camps where newcomers are told the rules of the literature game. A literate community is one in which the language arts—speaking, listening, reading and writing—are encouraged by being practiced in a setting in which each student's contributions are valued. A literate community assumes its members have something valuable to contribute. The teacher's primary role in the creation of a community of readers is to make possible the kind of conversation out of which meaning will emerge. This does not mean that teachers must hide their knowledge and insights but it does require a sense of shared ends and a commitment to share responses. In practical terms this implies a sharp reduction in the delivery of lectures in which texts are explained to students as if they were written in a foreign language, and the establishment of dialogues—student to student and teacher to student—in which interpretations are developed, negotiated and refined. A literate community encourages such sharing because it is founded on the premise that meaning-making is a dynamic process.

In addition to her acquired knowledge about a given text and the accumulation of interpretations she has built up, a good teacher has another, potentially more valuable asset to share with her students—she is a skilled reader. Many students do not know from their non-school experience how an experienced reader works. They may know what quarterbacks do, and what interviewers, nurses and police officers do because they have seen them do their work in real life and on TV. But most reading takes place in silence, in private, so it is critical, particularly for students at risk, that the literature teacher demonstrate reading and interpretation in her classroom.

How can this be done? All too often we spend our time asking questions to which we already know the answers, making up quizzes, lecturing, and making students feel inadequate as readers by explaining the "hidden meaning" of stories and poems. We work on comprehension, one end-product of reading, rather than on the process of reading itself. Instead

Many students do not know from their non-school experience how an experienced reader works.

we might, for example, read in class a poem we have not read before and then demonstrate the way a literate person goes about figuring things out, including the problems that elude us. We might keep our own reading response journals and share them with our students, showing them the questions we cannot answer and our own attempts to grapple with difficult issues. We might listen more carefully to our students' interpretive problems instead of pre-empting discussion with our own well-formulated views.

What we might try to do, in short, is to make the classroom a place where students learn what it means to entertain fictional worlds, not a place where they learn to wait for the answers. We could try to make the discussion in our classrooms more like the kind of talk we engage in with each other when we talk about books. We need to do this so that our students will learn the qualities of attention, openness and tolerance which a literate community demands of its members.

Make the Collaborative Learning Group the Building Block of Your Literate Community

A collaborative learning group is one in which people pool their knowledge and responses to solve some problem and where each member shares responsibility for the task at hand. It is a natural setting for meaning-making activities. Over the last few years the writing response group has become a staple ingredient of many writing classrooms, helping students to generate ideas, revise their thinking, and de-center authority. But in the study of literature, very often the primary modes of delivery are still lectures and large group discussions, which are themselves often simply teacher monologues interrupted by two or three articulate students.

When readers work together in groups to share readings and study problems of interpretation, a number of things can happen, as we discovered when we worked together in this fashion in LIT. We realized that, far from being dispassionate and objective students of literature, we are all situated readers, all written upon by our own worldly experiences in ways that influence our readings dramatically and which incline us to persist in the notion of one correct interpretation. We discovered how hard it is to give up our own interpretations. In writing groups many of us have learned how to collaborate and help our fellow writers say more clearly what they have to say; we can learn to cooperate with them without trying to take control of their discourse from them. But when we read

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and interpret together, we often seem to be in competition for what Sheridan Blau calls the available discursive space, as if interpretations are uneasy existing side by side and must be forever tussling to see who will be privileged.

In order to work effectively we must learn to play what Peter Elbow calls, in *Embracing Contraries*, the believing game. Most of our literary training, like the rest of our university education, has been in the doubting game, and many of us have become accomplished players. Like Descartes, our intellectual forebear, we learn to doubt everything until it can be irrefutably proved; the whole academic edifice rests on this principle. When it is the only game in town, it is not a game that many students find attractive. A few learn to play it with us but when it is applied to literature, to the exclusion of other approaches, too many of them leave our classes feeling disenfranchised, convinced that reading novels and poetry requires access to some secret code. Learning to play the believing game, in which, instead of immediately attacking or criticizing an apparently deviant reading we look for reasons to believe and reinforce it, can be a healthy antidote to excessive and dispiriting doubting.

Adapt What We Know About Process-Oriented Writing Instruction to the Teaching of Reading

In the National Writing Project Network we have found certain formulae useful. We speak, for example, of "Fluency—Form—Correctness" and of "Pre-writing, Writing, and Rewriting." I do not need to rehearse here the limitations of such formulae especially when they are transformed from heuristics into algorithms. They can be useful, however, in helping us to think about what we're doing when we teach writing, and in LIT we found a few formulations about reading similarly helpful: "Reading teachers must read," for example, "Reading is re-reading," and "Free-reading builds fluency."

The first of these injunctions reminds us that our own reading and interpretive processes can be a rich source of inspiration and ideas for our teaching. We are likely to be on intellectually firmer ground if we base our pedagogy on the experiences of actual readers rather than on our memories of past instruction. When we say "Reading is Re-reading," we might remember how little anyone ever gets from a single reading of a text and how little time our students have to re-read. Imagine what would happen to your reading requirements if you insisted that every novel be read at least twice. The emphasis on "free-reading" might remind us of what we know about oral language acquisition, that fluency develops best in a genuine interactive environment with little or no attention to error. We need strategies to encourage reading widely as well as the reading in depth we usually model when we "analyze" a piece of literature.

Just as we have learned that teacher intervention *during* the writing process is more helpful to the writer than laborious written comments *after* a paper is finished, so we need to recognize the importance of our involvement in the student's reading process *before* the ubiquitous comprehension test. One way to understand how a student is reading is to have her write about her insights and difficulties as she reads in some kind of reading journal. When she shares these insights and difficulties with her peers or with the teacher she can learn to read better: her insights can be valued and she will see that her difficulties are usually not signs of her failure to see what everyone else sees but genuine responses to interpretive problems in the text. We can best appreciate these problems ourselves if we reflect more on our own reading processes and pay somewhat less attention to our carefully prepared notes on criticism.

I have already suggested that we demonstrate reading and interpretation for our students by showing them how we go about dealing with an entirely new text. But it can go further than this. Many writing teachers now complete (some) assignments along with their students; literature teachers might benefit from reading along with their students. We are in a wonderful position to talk about the way interpretations can change with re-reading, since we are often quite familiar with the text being studied, and can demonstrate from our own experience the ways in which readings can build on one another, the ways in which our responses can change over time, and the ways in which experienced readers try to solve interpretive problems without always requiring closure.

...the literature classroom should also be a place where students learn what it is to dwell on issues, to think through problems, and to savor literary pleasures.

Finally we need to help students make the connection between reading and writing, help them to use writing as a way of reading better, as a way of addressing issues and problems which their reading may raise. If we think of reading as vicarious experience, and writing as a way of re-shaping experience, then writing about reading can become a way of making sense of experiences which one might not have had otherwise or whose importance one might have overlooked.

Make Time for Reading in the Classroom

Good readers are capable of paying close and careful attention to texts and of sustaining that attention over time. It is this ability to concentrate rather than the mastery of some "read-

ing skills" which characterizes the good reader. Unable to concentrate for long, the poor reader lacks the extensive practice that would make her fluent; frequently what looks like a problem of decoding, comprehension or interpretation is simply a problem of attention. We find a similar problem in the writing classroom; repeated errors are often not the result of ignorance at all but simply a failure to notice.

When they share their own genuine responses and pursue their own questions, students engage in the kind of conversation that constitutes literary discourse.

How can we encourage greater concentration without merely exhorting students to pay attention? It is tempting to blame some students' short attention span on television; they are used to the pacing of game shows and videos where one image follows another in mind-numbing succession and where commercial breaks make sustained attention unnecessary. But often our own classrooms display the same kind of fragmentation and nervous energy. We move rapidly and not always logically from talk about dangling modifiers to a discussion of theme and metaphor, from due dates to imagery in the assigned poems. We need to slow down and worry less about "covering the ground" and more about engaging students in problems of meaning and interpretation.

Especially in college-prep classes and certainly in college itself, we feel the urge to push on, to read more books, to give our students the received critical ideas and expose them to as much literature as possible. Clearly anything we can do to promote more eclectic reading is to be encouraged, but the literature classroom should also be a place where students learn what it is to dwell on issues, to think through problems, and to savor literary pleasures.

One way to slow down the process is to read aloud as we used to do in elementary school. The pleasure of being read to does not go away, and even though listening to another person read is not the same as reading silently oneself it does provide a model for what one's own reading might "sound" like. Also, when someone reads aloud in a classroom (either the teacher or a student), one hears more than the mere decoding of words on the page; one hears the beginning of an interpretation. Very often, for example, a poem can be opened up by focusing on the different emphases given by several students to the same line of text. Another strategy we have found helpful is to have students repeat back words, phrases, sentences or larger chunks which they have found especially striking. This "text rendering," as we call it, keeps our attention on the language itself for a while and allows us to pay attention to what others have noticed in a reading. A classroom in which such reading aloud takes place is a classroom which affirms the importance of the sound of language, which allows language time to work on its readers, and which demonstrates that texts must be sources of pleasure and engagement before they can be objects of literary study.

Give Students a Choice of Writing Tasks

One of the key ingredients in a successful writing program is choice. Students typically do not write well on topics they know little about or have had little time to prepare. Usually these essays have been assigned to test what they are supposed to know or understand rather than to help them find out what they need to know. The practice of assigning topics that seem important to us does not help students come to terms with their own problems of interpretation even though our topics may sometimes prompt important reflections. Instead of spending our time inventing questions for them, we would do better encouraging and training students to formulate their own questions which could then lead, with our encouragement, to a variety of written responses, rather than only to the traditional analysis or interpretive summary. If the only kind of writing about literary texts students do is the critical essay, we can hardly complain when those students fail to see the connections literature might have to their own lives.

Students need the experience of producing their own literary texts if they are fully to understand what is going on in the stories and poems they read. One could not be expected to talk very knowledgeably or intelligently about baseball, for example, without ever having played it or some similar ball game. What one can say, as a mere spectator, is necessarily limited. One can admire the shortstop's ability to scoop up the half-volley and start a double play, but someone who has tried to play shortstop appreciates the moves so much better, and may also have a greater sense of the beauty of the moment. Our students, especially our advanced students, are seldom asked to render experience into art themselves, only to comment, in a language that often seems opaque, on the artistic productions of others. Writing one's own poems or short stories, however clumsy or naive they may be, and then reflecting in writing on the process of turning observed experience into fiction, can help students see that though literature does indeed create new worlds, it often does so by rearranging and shaping actual events. Literature does not spring fully clothed from the pens of strange creatures called writers. The shaping, selecting and rearranging which we engage in quite naturally when we gossip and tell our own stories is often where the stories we call literature begin.

Students Need Opportunities to "Frame" Texts for Themselves, to Discover the Ways Their Personal Stories Connect with the Literature They Read

A good deal of traditional literature teaching proceeds from the assumption that students need an instructor both to

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identify significant literary problems for them and to answer them. Texts are thus "framed" by the teacher's pedagogical concerns and prior knowledge and experience so that students have little inducement to relate them to their own experiences. Critical fashions change, however, and what one generation regards as a significant issue may be regarded by the next as a side issue or no issue at all, the product of a limited point of view. The honest responses of engaged readers outlast critical fashions, however, so our emphasis should be on encouraging those responses and then subjecting them to reflection and questioning. When they share their own genuine responses and pursue their own questions, students engage in the kind of conversation that constitutes literary discourse. This approach does not exclude from consideration the teacher's responses and questions; in fact, when teachers are seen to have genuine questions about literary texts themselves, they are often taken more seriously and heard more clearly when they claim to know some answers!

One way of encouraging response to literature is to have students tell their own personal parallel stories. In response to a poem about a car journey taken as a child, for example (John Stone's "Coming Home"), students might be asked to write accounts of their own car journeys. Then the question might be asked, "How did your story help you read the poem and how did the poem help you read your own experience?" Using a piece of literature as an occasion for reflecting on one's own life has the potential both for deepening our understanding of the literature and for re-examining our own experiences in light of what we read.

Building on other people's stories in this way is what we do in ordinary conversation. When we hear someone recount an incident at the dinner table or at a party, we are likely to offer our own similar story in return, partly because that is what we expect in a conversation and partly because we have a natural tendency to look for connections between our own lives and experiences and those of others. This kind of conversation has its own unwritten rules. The person who simply uses my story as an excuse to tell his own, without regard for what my story might mean, will be seen to be self-centered and his contributions are likely to be ignored. Our favorite conversation partners are usually those who listen intently when we speak and then show they understand what we're saying by the appropriateness of the questions they ask and by their own parallel or contrasting stories. We often leave such conversations with a clearer sense of what our own experience has meant as well as a renewed sense of our connectedness to other people. Perhaps we see that our perceptions of some experience really were quite odd! Perhaps we recognize, with relief, that we are not so strange after all, and that others share our interpretive puzzles as we try to figure out why life should be the way it is.

If these "natural interpretive strategies," as I call them, are applied to works of literature, not necessarily to replace more formal analysis but in addition to it, our students might come to feel that literature is not simply an arcane subject accessible only to professors and critics, but something that has relevance for their own lives.

The Goal of Instruction Should Be to Open up Literary Texts Rather Than to Close Them Down Prematurely

The teacher who has taught *Hamlet* for years and who knows it intimately is sorely tempted to explain it all to students, especially when she sees them getting bogged down in a place where she feels she knows the answer. It is one of the dangers of teaching the same texts year after year. But before we continue our erudite explanations we must ask ourselves why we would want to solve students' problems for them, and whether there might be some other way of sharing our knowledge and expertise without pre-empting students' own necessary struggles. The question is whether teachers see themselves as collaborators with their students in a learning process or whether they see themselves as Freire's bankers, depositing knowledge into empty student accounts. You cannot demand that students get involved in solving meaningful questions if you are in the habit of eventually supplying the "right" answers yourself. Where teachers imply that they are the sources of literary authority, reading simply becomes another version of the game of guessing what the teacher thinks.

Paradoxically, the teacher who demonstrates the collaborative spirit and who does not labor under the mistaken assumption that she has all the answers, has a greater chance of having her own knowledge genuinely valued. She has a chance of being seen as a real expert, someone who has arrived at her "answers" through the same troublesome process as the students, rather than as the result of some epiphany granted to English Teachers in college. When teachers teach interpretation rather than texts, as Scholes puts it, students become more aware of the power of language to shape and reflect meaning, and more respectful of the ways in which individuals make meaning in transaction with the world. Students who understand this will be much more likely to become full participants in the democratic process, far less likely to become the victims of influential interpretations of reality which are simply moves to deprive them of their rights.

Of these principles perhaps the most important is the injunction to turn the classroom itself into a collaborative enter-

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Books

Art Peterson

THE JOURNAL BOOK
edited by Toby Fulwiler
Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1987

In Toby Fulwiler's introduction to *The Journal Book*, an important anthology in which Fulwiler collects much of the best writing about journal making as a way of learning, Fulwiler outlines the characteristics of a "good" journal and then steps back to allow his contributors to find a place within the context of these guidelines. According to Fulwiler, good journals share language which looks a lot like speech: the diction is colloquial and informal, the tone experimental and tentative. Because the journal form encourages experimentation, journal writers face virtually no limits on the character of their entries; however, good journals focus often on critical thinking modes such as observation, digression and synthesis. Finally, good journals, says Fulwiler, are characterized by frequent, long, self-sponsored, chronologically organized entries. "The key to journals," he writes, "is the location of each entry in time."

After laying out these ground rules, Fulwiler does not force any lockstep version of what a journal should be. Beginning with the book's first two contributions, he encourages divergency by inviting to the same party writing teachers who would seem not to agree on everything. In the book's first essay, Ann E. Berthoff advocates dialectical double entry journals kept in response to literature, a form which seems rather distant from the one Peter Elbow and Jennifer Clarke describe in the second essay, "Desert Island Discourse," a kind of personal introspection relatively uninhibited by structure.

The book's first section, "The Language of Speculation," in which these essays are included, establishes a framework: essays on journals as personal discovery, on journals for learning and relating to new information, on teacher response to journals, and on the history of journal keeping provide a structure for the nuts and bolts essays which follow. The range of disciplines and grade levels from which Fulwiler draws his contributors makes a strong case for the journal as a key tool in all learning. For instance, Ruth Nathan writes of her first graders' experience journals, Leon Gatlin of his college students' personal, often emotional journal encounters with Victorian literature; Catherine M. Larson and Margaret Merrion find that journals facilitate open, searching responses to the listening their students do in music appreciation class; and Barbara Schubert describes the math journals she uses with her fourth graders. One of Schubert's students writes, "The math journal helped me because what was in my mind I couldn't get on paper but when I started writing about it I knew more about it than I thought I did."

The Journal Book is full of this kind of testimony from students and teachers, collectively convincing evidence for the power of the journal as a source of learning. Time and again, contributors, who did not conspire in advance, write that journals counter passivity, demand students take responsibility for their learning, allow students to speak in their own voices, stimulate communcation between student and teacher, and create a vehicle which allows students to share ideas with each other and document the progress of their learning.

But while Fulwiler's contributors share enthusiasm, their teaching techniques do not fit a mold. The variety of teaching styles evidenced here is testimony to the flexibility of the journal as an agent for teachers as well as for learners. Some teachers direct student entries, at least some of the time: "Tell me some things about pronouns," one teacher prompts. Or in a college class: "Why was there such diversity of opinion and attitude in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century?" Another teacher thinks of the journals in her classroom as a medium for establishing a kind of written phone conversation with her students about their personal concerns. Then there are other teachers who encourage students to collect

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snatches of conversation, write poems, and presumably, think about God and life in general. Fulwiler allows it all.

Some teachers read every entry and write back a response in which they bare their own feelings; other teachers poke around, reading occasional entries, answering student questions and calling attention to points about which they would like to hear more. At least one teacher here never puts a grade on a journal, while another counts the journal as eighty percent of the grade.

The Journal Book has proved a personal catharsis for me. Journal keeping is a big part of my high school writing and literature classes, but I have never been comfortable with the "gushing"—to use Ann Berthoff's word—which journal writing sometimes encourages. While I understand that it is inappropriate for a teacher, in responding to a journal, to bleed red ink over faulty sentence constructions and spelling mistakes, I do not wish to altogether disavow my role as critic. Somehow, I get nervous about not doing my job if I do not consistently nudge students to give reasons for their opinions and evidence for their reasons. Therefore, when responding to journals, in addition to notes of deserved praise, I will regularly ask students questions such as "Why do you say this?" and "Can you give me an example?" Some contributors to *The Journal Book* might consider such prodding intrusive. They'd say I was pushing students to write for me, detracting from the journal as a place of personal discovery. I understand this argument, but, weighing all considerations, I am not ready to change. That's why I find Fulwiler's eclectic collection comforting and inspiring. It's my guess Fulwiler would be less likely to scold me for my biases than to ask me to clarify them for his next edition.

The Journal Book must be the best volume available for teachers who want to begin using journals, for those looking for new approaches to journals, and for those in search of confirmation that their enthusiasm for learning journals is shared by teachers in all disciplines and at all grade levels.

Art Peterson teaches English at Lowell High School in San Francisco. He is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project.

Jerry Herman

WRITING TO LEARN
by William Zinsser
Harper & Row, 1988

When was the phenomenon called "writing across the curriculum" born? Wrong question. The right question: When does writing across the curriculum die? The right answer: about the sixth grade. These might be called trick questions and a trick answer, but that is only because educators are often terribly dense about education, discarding obvious practices that work for theories that *should* work but often don't, yet those theories sometimes get entrenched in what we teach for generations. (Example: it has been known and shown for decades that teaching grammar in isolation does not improve students' writing, but the obsession to do it persists in the face of all the evidence.)

In primary school, when one teacher teaches virtually all subjects to students, good teachers will have those students write about *everything*; no subject is off limits because good primary teachers know that to write about a subject is to learn it effectively. Maybe that's too obvious because it gets scrubbed out of the curriculum when specialization begins about the sixth grade, and one teacher teaches science, another math, a third English and so on. From then on writing becomes the domain of the English curriculum, where it becomes isolated as a subject to learn, not as a means through which learning can take place. Teachers in other subjects may have their students write, or they may not. And in nearly all instances in disciplines other than

English, the writing is aimed at product, not process. Doesn't it seem obvious that something is wrong here? Incredibly enough it didn't for a very long time—and in most places it still doesn't. Eventually someone got the bright idea to do things the way they are done in the third grade, and writing across the curriculum was reborn into high school and college curricula as though it were something brand new: Students can write about history, about geology, about sociology, about economics, about physics, about—heaven help us—mathematics. Even more to the point, students can explore concepts, discover connections, conceive ideas through writing if every piece of writing isn't supposed to be formal, complete and correct, a caricature of what is published in academic journals. Write to learn! Now why hadn't someone thought of that before?

In his latest book William Zinsser thinks about it a great deal. *Writing to Learn* is Zinsser's "Aha!" about writing across the curriculum, his discovery about how it works and the good sense it makes. True to the idea of writing to learn, the book itself is exploratory about writing across the curriculum. In fact, Zinsser is open enough to tell us that he conceived the book one way, but it came out another. As he wrote, he learned. Here is Zinsser in the preface recounting his original purpose:

My book . . . would be mainly an anthology—a guided tour of good writing in the different crannies of the B.A. curriculum.

But something happened when I actually started to write. The book took on a life of its own and told me how it wanted to be written. I found myself yanked back to many corners of my past—to long-forgotten people and projects and travels that together taught me much of what I know. I realized that my life had been a broad education and that I couldn't write a book about learning without saying how much it has meant to me to be a generalist in a land that prefers narrow expertise. The anthology began to look suspiciously like a memoir.

I didn't fight the current. On the contrary, the writing of the book proved one of its central points: that we write to find out what we know and what we want to say.

Writing to Learn thus becomes " . . . a personal journey in which I confronted some of my own fears and lived to tell the tale." Zinsser writes the book to ease two fears he contends American education inflicts on everyone: the fear of writing and the fear of subjects we think we don't have an aptitude for. He finds relief for these fears in writing across the curriculum.

Zinsser's odyssey begins in 1985 with a phone call from chemistry professor Thomas Gover at Gustavus Adolphus College, a small liberal arts college in St. Peter, Minnesota. The college was about to embark on a writing across the curriculum project. Would Zinsser be interested in speaking to the faculty and students about writing? Yes, Zinsser would, and his interest eventually led him to write the book. He charts the progress from that phone call to the writing of *Writing to Learn* with "clarity, simplicity, warmth and enjoyment," not surprisingly the qualities of writing that Zinsser values most.

We learn of Zinsser's trip to Gustavus Adolphus, and subsequently about his prep school days, his college career at Princeton, his World War II military duty in Italy, his years at the *New York Herald Tribune* as a writer and editor, his free lance writing, and his decade at Yale as a professor of nonfiction writing and editor of the *Yale Alumni Magazine*.

The first half of the book, then, is an engaging memoir of a writer, editor, and teacher of writing, a generalist and a humanist who preaches the gospel of clarity, humanity, and the interrelationship of thinking and writing regardless of subject or discipline. Here's an example of how that works: Zinsser narrates how he came to research and write a complex piece on a Yale colleague, a professor of music, who wanted to show the similarities between Gregorian chants and Negro

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BOOKS

continued from previous page

spirituals. As Zinsser tells the story, he recalls how he accumulated more good material than he thought he could handle, and in his despair over ever finishing the piece, he found sanctuary in this principle of writing: *. . . [W]riting is linear and sequential. If sentence B logically follows sentence A, and if sentence C logically follows sentence B, I'll eventually get to sentence Z. I also try to remember that the reader should be given only as much information as he needs and not one word more. Anything else is self-indulgence.*

Few writing teachers will fail to say "Amen" to that or to the other nuggets studded throughout his narrative: "I don't like to write, but I take great pleasure in having written—in having finally made an arrangement that has a certain inevitability, like the solution to a mathematical problem. Perhaps in no other line of work is delayed gratification so delayed."

Another: ". . . the essence of writing is rewriting . . . After a lifetime of writing I still revise every sentence many times and worry that I haven't caught every ambiguity; I don't want anyone to have to read a sentence of mine twice to find out what it means." That nearly astonishing courtesy to his readers is not entirely selfless since what it means for Zinsser is that he, too, in the writing of it, discovers his meaning. Through writing he learns, and so can anyone, he argues persuasively through the book.

Zinsser's admiration and sympathy for English teachers at every level represent another underpinning to his call for writing across the curriculum:

Under the American system . . . [English teachers] are the people who teach our children to write. If they don't, nobody will. They do it with dedication, and I hope they'll be rewarded, if not here on earth, at least in heaven, for there's almost no pedagogical task harder and more tiring than teaching someone to write . . . English teachers ought to have some relief . . . They shouldn't have to assume the whole responsibility for imparting a skill that's basic to every area of life. That should be everybody's job.

Later, however, as he warms to the subject of the difficulty of teaching writing and the credit due writing teachers, he amply demonstrates why teaching writing has not been "everybody's job":

The bad habits [of writing] are too habitual. They can be cured only by the most painful of surgical procedures: operation on what the writer has actually written . . . Like the parent who tells the spanked child that "this hurts me more than it does you," the writing teacher wants nothing so much as a paper that's well written—one that won't mire him in endless repairs and emotional debris. I sometimes find myself emitting small moans as I start to read a paper and realize the magnitude of the problems ahead.

Why, then, would anyone is his right mind want to be a writing teacher? The answer is that writing teachers aren't altogether in their right mind. They are one of the caring professions, no more sane in the allotment of their time and energy than the social worker or the day care worker or the nurse. Whenever I hear them talk about their work, I feel that few forms of teaching are so sacramental; the writing teacher's ministry is not just to the words but to the person who writes the words.

When most of us writing teachers began our careers, we had little idea that we were entering the clergy, much less any cognizance that the moral imperatives of the job were to be so stringent that merely persisting at our task would qualify us for sainthood. Doesn't this throw up a formidable "Beware, all ye who enter here" sign for anyone in another discipline who entertains the notion of teaching writing? Apparently so, since historically faculty from few other disciplines have challenged English departments for the privilege of instructing in the elimination of the dangling participle or the concept of the copulative verb. However, our colleagues' criticism of English teachers for not turning all of our students into writers of clarity and correctness, if not charm and wit, has been abundant. But isn't that, after all, what martyrdom is all about?

If Zinsser says we English teachers are not in our right minds for our dedication to teaching writing, a duty that comes with the territory, who the heck are these crazies from other subjects who want to do it voluntarily? He introduces many of them in the book: virtually the entire faculty of Gustavus Adolphus College; John Rodgers, geology professor at Yale; Joan Countryman, high school math teacher in Philadelphia; Naola VanOrden, chemistry professor at Sacramento City College. As Zinsser reports his conversations with them, not one of them seems psychotic, not even on the verge of a nervous breakdown. All of them believe, however, that writing about their subjects will teach their students more than all the multiple choice tests they can throw at them.

VanOrden, for example, wants her chemistry students to synthesize what they have learned from the chemistry text, so she gives them pertinent "real-life" chemistry problems to write about. The premise of one assignment has the student as the manager of a pet shop. A customer complains that the fish in her pond are dying. The manager's job is to analyze the water to ascertain the cause of the fishy fatalities, then to write a letter to the customer explaining the cause and suggesting chemical treatment that will render the lethal pond harmless. VanOrden writes, "I believe that writing is an effective means of improving thinking . . . Writing also improves self-esteem because mentally processed ideas then belong to the writer and not just to the teacher or the textbook author."

The second part of *Writing to Learn* is a series of chapters on excellent writing in disciplines other than English. Zinsser not only quotes extensively from eloquent writing in those fields, but provides a running commentary on how he discovered the writers and what qualities he admires about their writing. Many of the writers quoted are recognizable geniuses in their fields: Einstein on physics, Darwin on zoology, Rachel Carson on oceanography, Virgil Thompson on music. But there are also wonderfully readable excerpts from scholarly articles by academics unknown outside their fields. In the chapters on math and chemistry, Zinsser publishes engaging student writing responding to creative assignments like VanOrden's above.

If I had to characterize *Writing to Learn* in a sentence, I'd call it the best example I've ever read of Ken Macrorie's I-Search concept, where a writer chooses a subject that fascinates him, finds out all he can about it, and writes from a personal perspective not only what he has found but how he went about making his discoveries. Naturally William Zinsser is not a college freshman assigned an I-Search paper who has heard about writing across the curriculum and hopes that it might make an interesting topic. His I-Search book is by an author for whom writing has been bred into the bone, whose *On Writing Well* has become a minor classic as a writing text. As a devout teacher of writing, he felt compelled to spread the good news about this phenomenon called writing across the curriculum that all those third grade teachers had been keeping secret from the rest of us for so long.

I like *Writing to Learn* not only because of its information and ideas but because I like the writer. Zinsser condemns typical academic prose for being " . . . squeezed dry of human juices—a Sargasso Sea of passive verbs, long and generalized nouns, pompous locutions and unnecessary jargon." Not to worry about *Writing to Learn*. The warmth of Zinsser's human juices radiates from its pages. I never stumbled over a pompous locution. Zinsser himself captures my feeling about him and his book: " . . . what a pleasure it is to be in the company of a writer with enthusiasm for his subject . . . It doesn't matter what the subject is . . . This is the personal connection that every reader wants to make with a writer; if we care about the writer we'll follow him into subjects that we could have sworn we never wanted to know about." I felt the personal connection. I was Zinsser's companion on a 236-page exploratory journey, and he was very good company indeed, a man who knows a great deal about writing but who genuinely wants to know more, a writer, thank God, who practices what he preaches.

Jerry Herman is English Department Chair at Laney College in Oakland, California. He is a Teacher Consultant with the Bay Area Writing Project.

CSW UPDATE UPDATE

Bay Area Teachers Join Vivian Paley for a Day That Links Research to Practice

". . . and the pigs ate the wolf. Happily ever after, the end." Stories that change; stories that change us; stories that change the social context; stories that tell who we are, what we wish to be, and what we fear—the spontaneously told stories that usually lead a private existence in the doll corner or block area of the elementary school classroom have become the tools of teaching and research for Vivian Gussin Paley, head teacher at the University of Chicago Laboratory Schools and author of six nationally known books about kindergarten and preschool classroom life. In a day devoted to exploring Vivian Paley's work with children, April 28 marked a first for the Center for the Study of Writing at Berkeley when forty elementary school teachers joined Paley, members of the Center's Council of Teachers, and Center researchers for a full day of activities linking research to practice. The day was organized by Marcia Umland and Harriett Morrison, both members of the Center's Council of Teachers.

The forty elementary, kindergarten, and preschool school teachers, who teach children ranging from four to eight years old, began the day at a workshop led by Paley in which she explained the philosophy and practice of dramatizing children's dictated stories. In their exploration of this language arts activity, it became evident that Paley's work is about more than dictated writing and drama in the classroom; it is also about how, in the tentative, figurative language of fantasy, young children construct a dynamic society with its own history, all this contained in a social document recorded by their teacher.

Later in the day, the teachers assembled at the University of California's Harold Jones Child Study Center, where they had an opportunity to observe children dictating and dramatizing their stories as part of the regular nursery school program under head teacher Barbara Scales. At the Child Study Center, in small groups led by members of the Center's Council of Teachers, the teachers discussed the classroom implications of Paley's work.

In the late afternoon, the teachers reconvened at the Center for the Study of Writing, where Melanie Sperling, the Center's Director of Research Application, gave a brief overview of the Center, its history, its research, and its affiliation with the National Writing Project.

Completing the day was Paley's presentation to the Center seminar, "Must Teachers Also Be Writers?" Through vignettes that brought the audience into Paley's classroom and to her writing desk, Paley replied to that question—"Yes, we must write to teach"—and discussed how, through their own documentary and reflective writing, teachers can uncover the meaning behind what young children say and do in their classrooms. Said Paley, through writing, a teacher is reminded to say tomorrow, "I think I didn't understand, yesterday, about the pigs and the wolf. I believe I understand today."

BAWP Teachers to Join Anne Haas Dyson, CSW, for Literacy Seminar

In a two-day meeting, Bay Area Writing Project teachers of pre-schoolers, kindergartners, and first and second graders will join Center for the Study of Writing researcher Anne Haas Dyson to discuss her studies of young children's literacy development. The meeting days are being planned by Center Council of Teachers members Marcia Umland and Harriett Morrison. The two days will focus on Dyson's longitudinal examination of the case-study children in an elementary school classroom as they drew, wrote, and talked among themselves during their journal-writing time. The first of the two-day meetings will be devoted to discussing Dyson's paper, *Drawing, Talking, and Writing: Rethinking Writing Development*, (CSW Occasional Paper No. 3). During the second meeting, teachers will bring student work, tapes of student talk during a writing period in their own classrooms, and questions that they wish to explore in their own teacher research.

This section of CSW Update was written by Marcia Umland, with Harriett Morrison. Umland and Morrison are both members of the Center's Council of Teachers and are Teacher Consultants with the Bay Area Writing Project. Umland teaches at Vista School and Morrison teaches at Cornell School, both part of the Albany Unified School District.

BAWP Workshop Focuses on Research

On May 13, as part of the Bay Area Writing Project's Saturday Workshop Series, Carol Tateishi, Co-Director of BAWP and chair of the Center for the Study of Writing's Council of Teachers, led a workshop for 27 participants in a hands-on discussion of *A Good Girl Writes Like a Good Girl: Written Response and Clues to the Teaching/Learning Process* (CSW Technical Report No. 3), written by Melanie Sperling and Sarah W. Freedman about their research on the effects of teachers' written comments on student writing. Tateishi led the teacher participants through discussion and small group work focused on their own comment writing, then presented Sperling and Freedman's research, which led to more discussion and group work relating the research to the participants' own practice. The workshop gave the participants new insights into the reading-writing interactions entailed by students' reading of their teachers' comments on their papers, as well as new strategies for working with students in improving their writing. Writing Projects and other groups interested in talking to Tateishi about her workshop approach integrating Center research may contact her at the Bay Area Writing Project, Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

For an annotated list of CSW publications and an order form, write to: CSW, 5513 Tolman Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Carnegie Mellon Studies Students' Research Writing

Jennie Nelson and John R. Hayes from Carnegie Mellon have recently completed a study of college students engaged in the writing of research papers. As we well know, colleges and universities expect students to do a great deal of this kind of writing, yet we understand relatively little about how students approach this sophisticated task. Nelson and Hayes conducted two exploratory studies in order to begin to discover the skills and assumptions, strategies and goals, that freshmen as compared to advanced writers bring to the typical task of writing a research paper. They also were interested in finding out how particular classroom contexts might influence student performance.

In the first study, the researchers found that freshmen and advanced writers invoked very different goals and strategies for completing their assignments. Most of the freshmen set out on what Nelson and Hayes call "fact-finding missions." They wanted to get information as efficiently as possible, the implicit question behind their evaluation of source material being "How easily can information be extracted?" Advanced writers, in contrast, were concerned with finding a specific issue or angle to guide their searches, the implicit question behind their evaluation of source material being "Who wrote this, when, and for what purpose?" Nelson and Hayes contrast the two strategies as "content-driven" versus "issue-driven" and note that both strategies were well-adapted to the particular tasks students were defining for themselves: the freshmen tended to define their task in terms of assembling and reproducing what others have written on a topic, while the advanced writers defined theirs in terms of arguing for a position or finding a new approach to a topic. Apparently behind these two very different goals was the writer's definition of his or her role in the writing situation. Unlike the freshmen, advanced writers tended to see themselves as contributing members of an academic community.

In their second study, Nelson and Hayes looked at the influence of classroom context on writers' goals and strategies. They found that "students have an extensive set of very refined, dead-end strategies for writing from sources . . . [that] appear tailor-made for writing to the teacher-as-examiner . . ." But when students were provided with contexts in which a kind of community of scholars was created and when they were provided with a range of instructional supports, they were seen to be capable of using writing strategies that resembled those of the more experienced writers. Nelson and Hayes conclude that "if we expect students to transform ideas and information from sources into original syntheses and conclusions, we must provide support for their efforts, especially since such expectations and goals may be new to many students."

A complete report of this research, including descriptive case studies of individual students, can be found in Nelson and Hayes' new paper, *How the Writing Context Shapes College Students' Strategies for Writing from Sources* (Technical Report No. 16), available for $3.00 from the Center for the Study of Writing at Berkeley.

Jane Zeni Flinn

Electronic Writing: The Autobiography of a Collaborative Adventure

Message 6736 Chris Madigan (Chris, 2121) 10-26-86 7:10 PM

File ACTS-C

Jane:10-19 Chris:10-26

The tenor's voice labored as Siegfried forged his sword from fragments of shattered steel. Wagnerian opera and black coffee—my favorite writing ritual.

Wrapping my long red bathrobe a bit tighter against the midnight chill of the sleeping house, I squinted at the monitor. Green letters flashed across the screen, scrolling upward. "Great! It's here. He's finally done with that section," I whispered, still just a bit awed by a message from my electronic co-author:

Although few of the schools we have observed place computers directly in the classroom, studying Peggy Ryan's setting showed us the potential of electronic writing tools. Another model setting is Anne Wright's tutorial writing center described above.

[*Identify Anne by name above, then. I don't know which lab was hers.***]**

"Okay, you're right," I grumbled, sipping from yet another mug of coffee perched on a coaster near my keyboard, then chewing at a dried apricot. "Good—Now if you can just come up with a way to organize the stuff I threw into the part on 'Evaluation.'"

We had thought it would be fun to write an article together. We'd watched several of our Teacher Consultants discover computers and start using them, not for spelling games, but for real writing. We'd worked together on a grant to weave computers into the fabric of our Writing Project.(1) After four years of learning-by-doing, Gateway had developed an Institute that felt right, that used technology but kept the focus on writing. So when NCTE sent out a "Call for Papers" on teaching English teachers to use computers, we saw our chance. Chris and I had survived each other's feedback as members of a response group—why not a collaborative essay on a topic we both knew well?

We rough-planned on a file folder during a lunch break at a conference, deciding to take turns writing sections of the article. Then we headed home to draft our respective pieces—

Message 23700 Chris Madigan (Chris, 2121) 9-21-86 9:18 PM

Dear Jane,

Okay, October 15 it is for the first deadline. But we need to revise our who-does-what list. Here's a possibility. What do you think?

INTRO	**Madigan**
GOAL	**Flinn**
ACTIVITIES	
ACTS-A—Teaching Teachers	**Madigan**
ACTS-B—Supporting Change	**Flinn**
ACTS-C—Research	**Flinn**
ACTS-D—Dissemination	**Madigan**
EVALUATION	
EVAL-A—Methods	**Flinn**
EVAL-B—Results	**Madigan**

I figure we can each contribute info to the other, but we'd be responsible for first-drafting the sections I've marked. If that doesn't set okay with you, let me know.

That was Chris—always organized, always fair. He had been my colleague, friend, and sometime mentor. I'd introduced him to the Writing Project and he'd introduced me to computers. He led Gateway's Summer Institute in 1985, then moved West to teach and start a Writing Project at the University of New Mexico. Our response group in St. Louis fizzled for a while after Chris left, and I thought our chances of collaborative writing would fizzle too.

But I didn't reckon on this modem. The FIPSE grant had given each of us one of these squatty silver cigar boxes that now linked our computers through a thousand miles of phone wires. I learned to slip the communications disk into Drive A, type the initial command, and watch, fascinated, as the words grew letter by letter across the screen, connecting us to the host computer in New Jersey.(2) "Bee-bee-beep-bee-bee-bee-beep" sang the touch tones, with no phone in sight, just red lights flashing in a row on the face of the modem.

For a few months, we both typed messages as members of a teleconference. A dozen computerphiles from architecture, genetics, music, and yes, writing were using the modem to talk about a common theme, "design," and its role in our seemingly disparate fields.(3) That teleconference became my new toy. There was camaraderie and stimulation, but no pressure to perform any immediate task. I found myself using it to unwind—when I finished my "real" academic writing, I'd log on to the teleconference and chat.

Then Chris and I ventured into riskier electronic territory: our collaborative essay.(4) Each of us would draft one of our assigned sections, date it ("Chris: 10-26"), and send it via modem for the other's response, also dated ("Jane: 11-01"). This process might then be repeated, with some pieces—like EVAL—flying across the phone wires a dozen times.

At first, we'd set off our comments with stars and brackets, being careful not to tamper with each other's text—

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Message 6730 Jane Flinn (Jane, 295) 11-
01-86 12:37 AM

File ACTS-A

Chris:10-26 Jane:11-01

The Institute runs approximately 4
weeks. Morning is class-time; afternoon
is writing time. In the morning, par-
ticipants share reactions to readings,
discuss their students' and their own
writing processes, hear presentations,
do writing exercises, respond to each
other's writing in pairs and small
groups, see software demonstrations,
discuss how to adapt all this to their
classrooms, eat donuts, and drink gal-
lons of coffee.

[**I like this. Whole paragraph gives
me the flavor of the project. How about
leading in with "A typical institute
runs four weeks . . .**]

In the afternoon, participants read and
write in the computer lab. While half
are drafting, revising, or printing at
the computers, the other half is
[*are*] either kibitzing, reading . . .
or conferring with teachers or peers on
their drafts. . . .

[**Someplace, Chris, I think you should
mention the use of a large monitor
hooked to a single computer for demon-
strations of writing processes. . . .
It worked so well last summer that
nearly all our teachers are badgering
their schools to buy one**]
```

As the weeks went on and the files and revisions accumulated, we took more risks. Chris jokingly deflated one of my more pompous lines—

```
Gateway leaders sought to counter the
computer-driven drill and practice
programs while supporting computers as
powerful writing tools. The Department
of Education agreed and awarded GWP a
grant exceeding $100,000.

[**I still say you applied for the
grant just to avoid summer vacations**]
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And I critiqued his connotations—

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A student aide shepherds the Institute
library, sets up hardware, and does
clerical work. Teacher Consultants
return to the Institute to share their
classroom tips. . . .

[***Love 'shepherds,' don't like
'tips'—sounds patronizing.***]
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Sometimes I found myself responding not simply to the text but to the content. Here, for example, I replied to his description of a Gateway assignment by telling of my own paper:

continued on next page

Electronic Writing

continued from previous page

The first assignment—"Recreate . . . an experience you had (good or bad) with a machine"—takes a week, ventilates feelings about technology (usually cars), and mimics personal experience assignments participants often give their students.

[*Chris, I loved writing my machine paper—it dealt with learning to drive a shift car in Germany in 1966, an incident I've told orally dozens of times but never written down—twas a real help when I talked about Britton, "20 years of incubation."*]

Sometimes we "talked" our way through a section by messaging back and forth, freewriting interactively. The piece in which we tried to weave together ideas about formative and summative evaluation seemed to call for this kind of ongoing dialogue:

Message 11809 Chris Madigan (Chris, 2121) 11-8-86 11:15 PM

File EVAL

Chris:10:20 Jane:11-8 Chris:11-8

(I need to put the next section of EVAL into finished prose—Jane)

Conferencing, peer groups, journal responses, grading—especially this past summer, Anne and I got into a lot of comments-on-comments . . . and thought it was a big asset. That is, we had people quickwrite how they felt about peer response. . . . Two interns also skimmed Anne's and my first set of journal comments and commented about our comments. All of this relates in my mind to the writer's notion of "revision" and the programmer's notion of "recursion. . . ."

[*BINGO! I call it "debriefing. . . " It's conscious monitoring of your process. Without it, teachers do NOT automatically recognize what they're going through as writers and (next step) therefore what their students go through and (next step) therefore what they as controllers of their students' environments can do.***]**

Such dialogue allowed us to pull back and respond to a whole section, not just a turn of phrase or a point of fact:

[*Why did you not use the two-part METHODS/RESULTS organization for this EVAL? . . . I perceive competing organizations. . . . Maybe it's just "leftovers." How do you see this section, Jane?***]**

Gradually, we let go of our carefully allocated pieces, to share ownership of the paper—

[Chris, I finally see where my stuff on model school sites is going. It should be part of 'dissemination.' If it doesn't duplicate what you're writing for that section, use it there or plug in chunks.***]**

Chris obliged by refocusing my transitions, and the section worked:

We have found that good programs in writing with computers spread by word of mouth and by imitation as much as by direct teaching. In the past four years, dozens of high schools in St. Louis . . . have established writing centers, most staffed or led by Gateway Teacher Consultants. . . . Such informal dissemination is consistent with NWP tradition. The Summer Institute builds commitment, and each generation . . . spreads the word to new people and new sites. Computers just make that spread of ideas more visible. . . .

Gradually we gained enough trust to break out of our brackets and to work directly on each other's text—deleting, moving, reshaping, but always sending the revision back for approval.

A couple of times one of us rewrote the other's piece, then felt dissatisfied with his or her own work:

P.S. Jane, I'm still having trouble with the EVAL. I'm cutting it down, but somehow it feels wrong. I can't pin it down. Either it repeats too much of what we've said before, or else it doesn't address what we say are our

goals, or it addresses them sideways. I'm not sure. I'll let you wrestle with that once I send the file.

(He tried giving me an outline for a new organization, but *that* felt wrong to me.)

A couple of times the original author started to bristle—

Chris, I thought in general your cutting worked fine. I did feel your In-service section (ACTS-A) could go to a list rather than paragraphs, but had little to quarrel with in the INTRO and Summer Institute parts. I really didn't feel good about dropping my GOALS section, even though I can see that you've tied the themes into the EVAL outline. The text you sent me is 8 single-spaced pages—5 from your first drafting, 3 from mine. . . .

But most of the time, the exchange was genial. We'd accompany a draft with notes about our kids, gripes about our work schedules, or university gossip—

Jane, I'm starting to tire, but I want to push the home-stretch schedule. Lauren's got a soccer tournament next weekend, and I don't want to be stuck at the computer.

His complaint was interrupted by the arrival of my EVAL and ACTS-C.

Okay, we're cooking. Talk to you this afternoon. Chris.

The modem became a kind of therapist, ready to listen with a beep and a flash, bringing a friendly response more quickly than the mail and more cheaply than the phone. When Chris faced a bunch of disgruntled graduate students, he took out his frustration on the keyboard and I typed back with empathy. When I was exhausted, I had to share my distress—

Chris, I'm sorry I've been so slow. I think I'm getting too old for these all-nighters. Actually, I was late because Mark was home last week with stomach crud, I felt the same symptoms, so I went to bed Thursday instead of writing. By Friday I was back in gear, so as you know I tried the old opera and black coffee routine. Today I'm really feeling awful, and I have a meeting at 8 AM. Enough excuses, but I'm going to bed after this message and won't be home till after 5 PM tomorrow. Here's the best I could do with EVAL. Peace! Jane

Finally, we had a draft, pruned well within the official page limit. It explained our Summer Institute on teaching the writing process with computers, our follow-up workshops in the schools, our programs of teacher research and publication, and our approach to assessment. Chris dubbed the file, a composite of all our reworked sections, "BIGONE"—

Message 11967 Chris Madigan (Chris, 2121) 11-9-86 10:20 PM

KEYS: /BEHOLD/BIGONE/

BEHOLD! A 16 page—16, mind you, and doublespaced—draft of all the sections preceding EVAL. All of it's in Ascii, so translate for your computer. Triple asterisks mark info we've yet to supply. Let me know what you think.

(Coming just a few days after Halloween, I first read the title on the screen as "Begone"—seemed like a sort of ghoulish incantation—"Behold . . . Begone!")

By this time, we felt the text really belonged to both of us. This led to some unexpected quandaries with personal pronouns. Our text said, "The modem has provided a link between the Gateway site in Missouri led by Flinn and the site in New Mexico being developed by Madigan." I remarked—

Chris, I'm never sure how to handle references to oneself when two people are involved. I've used a lot of "we" forms, which sound fine, I think. But how to specify when just one of us is meant? Earlier you referred to "a former GWP instructor now in NM"—yet you are one of the co-authoring "we's." I thought of "GWP site in MO led by one of us and the site in NM being developed by the other," but think it's unnecessarily mysterious. Still, I don't like referring to myself in the third person. Any solutions???

We wound up with this:

The modem has also linked the two authors of this paper and helped keep Gateway in St. Louis in contact with the new site in Albuquerque.

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Electronic Writing

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Yet we retained our own identities as authors. If anything, the collaboration made us more aware of our separate composing processes, writing styles, and goals. After Chris made several attempts to reorganize EVAL, the section in which I'd tried to weave together some broad themes such as recursiveness and collaboration, I saw it. I wanted the returning leitmotifs of Wagnerian opera; Chris wanted the structured algorithms of Pascal programming. I wanted the right-brained leaps connecting theme to theme; Chris wanted the left-brained analyses of courses, organizations, and sequences.

We knew that these differences could help our paper speak to different audiences, and we didn't want to homogenize our thinking. But it was clear now that I was the one who had to revise EVAL. I had conceived the leitmotifs and I would have to compose them into a text that worked. Chris could give feedback or edit the fine points, but we'd reached the limit of collaboration. With a sigh of resignation, I messaged Chris that my next attempt at EVAL would be—

much shorter, but still at least a bit Wagnerian.

And so at last the final piece fit.

Chris:10-20 Jane:11-8 Chris:11-8
Jane:11-9 Chris:11-9 Jane:11-13

Throughout our experience with computers and writing, we find a coherence based on recurring themes: the writing process, the computer process, the research process, the teaching process, the school change process. In working with "process" in all these forms, we find a pattern of successive approximation through two kinds of activities: collaboration and recursion.

During this project, which was itself both collaborative and recursive, we would often step back to reflect on what we were doing. Accustomed to tracing the composing process, each of us kept a file folder with every printout gathered at every stage in our dialogue—

Chris, this is fun! If we ever get this paper done, I'm going to use these files and write something about collaborative composing.

Bye for now, Jane

I remembered that plan the next summer when I assigned the first paper at the GWP Institute. My own "experience with a machine" would tell the story of this collaboration via modem.(5) As I read through the two-inch-thick folder that documented our four-month-long adventure, I grew still more fascinated with the joint authoring process.

In what mode had we been writing? The article itself was clearly explanatory—an academic discussion of GWP's work with computers in Summer Institutes, in-service programs, teacher research, and evaluation. But what of the expressive text that infiltrated every file? The finished product was academic prose, but the computer had recorded a larger and more eclectic text-in-progress. Our electronic writing was both professional and intimate, both formal and informal, both distant and immediate.

In a face-to-face writing workshop, those same modes would have emerged. But the expressive would be oral—peer response, writer's musings—and the explanatory text would be written. In our electronic writing workshop, we could not speak—yet we needed to—and the swift exchange of files through the modem enticed us to imagine a conversation at the keyboard. Walter Ong says that "The Writer's Audience is Always a Fiction."(6) Our typed-out talk was conceived for two quite different fictionalized audiences.

The expressive text was intended for the co-author alone. The writing is chatty, personal, often elliptical, with the compressed syntax and lack of elaboration we use among members of our own in-group. It is a style that communicates only because of the meanings shared between writer and audience. (Chris knew that I would understand his "who-does-what list," a phrase that might sound cryptic to an anonymous reader.) Michael Spitzer, in "Writing Style in Computer Teleconferences,"(7) found this oddly conversational intimacy even among people who did *not* know one another offline. The computer seems to give writers just enough distance to feel safe. The comments are public but not published in any permanent way. They tempt us into the clever asides, the stage whispers, as we pursue our "official" conversation in the essay.

The explanatory text was intended for the co-author plus the unknown readers of an eventual book. The writing is formal, the sentences longer and more embedded, the meanings elaborated right down to the last footnote. It is a style polished to communicate with a diverse and distant audience with whom the writer cannot be sure of much shared territory.

Why did this feel so different from scrawling "interested-reader" comments on the texts of my colleagues in response groups? I think partly because the medium for response was so quick and so flexible. When I sent Chris a draft with comments, I often had an acknowledgment within the hour.

And I wasn't restricted by the size of a margin. If my comments got rolling into a discovery draft, they didn't get cramped into brevity or crowded onto a separate sheet of notebook paper. I could easily flow from conversation back to essay style, then later do a block move to insert the unexpected "good" stuff into the article.

Once we dropped the bracketed comments and started manipulating each other's text on our own monitors, our responses inevitably grew more personal. I was not simply an interested reader commenting on a colleague's work. I was an author commenting on text that was mine as much as his; I was an observer commenting on a process as I participated in it. I would assume my joint author's role and play my part in the dialogue, then step back to watch the scene replay as I scrolled through the text, and then in my stage whisper tell the crew in the wings what I thought of the performance. Here was my favorite leitmotif—"comments-on-comments," or as Chris called it, "debriefing."

To a startling degree, this electronic essay made me conscious of how I write, how I think. It got me involved in the sort of Deweyan reflection-on-the-process that to me is the key to real education. A learner tries something new, steps back, then suddenly recognizes how and why it worked. Eureka! Better still, the learner articulates that discovery, tells the story of that personal adventure in learning. That's why I had to write this essay—to reflect on my experience with long-distance collaboration and to bring home a trophy from that adventure into unknown territory.

Notes

1. The Gateway Writing Project is a joint site of the University of Missouri-St. Louis and Harris-Stowe State College. GWP's work with computers in the writing process was supported by the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education and the National Writing Project, as well as by the host institutions.

2. This is the EIES network, the Electronic Information Exchange System at the New Jersey Institute of Technology. EIES was used for the teleconference discussed in the next paragraph and for our collaborative essay.

3. The teleconference was sponsored by the FIPSE Technology Study Group. Two publications have emerged from a year of electronic dialogue: a special issue of *Machine-Mediated Learning*, Vol. 2, Nos. 1 & 2 (1987), edited by Diane Balestri and Stephen C. Ehrmann, on computers and the teaching of "design" in various disciplines; a policy report, *Ivory Towers; Silicon Basements: Learner-Centered Computing in Postsecondary Education*, by the FIPSE Technology Study Group, McKinney, TX: Academic Computing Publications/EDUCOM, 1988. Each volume went through inordinate sessions of peer review and editing, both face-to-face and on-line.

4. The essay whose story I am telling now has a public identity: "The Gateway Writing Project: Staff Development and Computers in St. Louis," by Jane Zeni Flinn and Chris Madigan. In *Computers in English and Language Arts: The Challenge of Teacher Education*, edited by Cynthia Selfe, Dawn Rodrigues, and William Oates. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, in press.

5. An earlier version of this article, written during the 1987 Summer Invitational Institute, appeared in the booklet *All the Write Moves* published informally by the Gateway Writing Project at the University of Missouri-St. Louis.

6. See Walter Ong, "The Writer's Audience Is Always a Fiction." In *Interfaces of the Word*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977.

7. See Michael Spitzer, "Writing Style in Computer Conferences." *IEEE Transactions on Professional Communications*, March 1986.

Jane Zeni Flinn is Director of the Gateway Writing Project at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, where she is an Assistant Professor of English and Educational Studies.

Building a Literate Community

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prise. If students are to be convinced that they are meaning-makers and not just note-takers, they need a much more active role than they are given in many literature courses. And it is not simply a matter of lecturing less and providing more time for what is often euphemistically called "class discussion." Students need something better than the Darwinian atmosphere of traditional classroom discussion, in which the most vocal and opinionated speakers prosper, if they are to become full participants. They need built-in occasions to listen to each other. They need to learn to negotiate meaning, to share responsibility for figuring things out, to take account of what other people say. One of the extraordinary by-products of talking about literature with other people is that we learn more about them as well as about the texts we study. The collaborative learning group is a place to do that, an opportunity to break the cycle of isolation and the intellectual free-market chaos that characterizes much of students' learning lives. It offers a place to practice what Bruffee calls the "conversation of mankind."

Angus Dunstan is Co-Director of the South Coast Writing Project and Associate Director of LIT. In Fall 1989, he will be an Assistant Professor of English at California State University, Sacramento.

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Courtney Cazden, Judy Diamondstone, and Paul Naso

Teachers and Researchers: Roles and Relationships

This article and the responses to it by Susan Florio-Ruane and Carl Bereiter are based on addresses given at the American Educational Research Association Conference in 1988.

We are both teachers and researchers of writing, and interested in how those two kinds of work—teaching and research—are related, both conceptually and in practice. We therefore were delighted when the AERA Special Interest Group on Language Development suggested that a paper on relationships between research on the teaching of writing done by teachers and that done by researchers would be a useful stimulus for discussion. We were further delighted when Susan Florio-Ruane and Carl Bereiter agreed to respond to our ideas.(1)

"Knowledge in Use" and How It Is Changed

In "Philosophy of Research on Teaching," Fenstermacher (1986) argues for a particular relationship between research on teaching and the practice of teaching—a relationship that is based on his conceptualization of the nature of "knowledge in use," and of how that knowledge may be changed.

According to Fenstermacher, teachers' knowledge in use has the form of *practical arguments*—with premises in the form of assertions about educational goals, how pupils learn, what means are effective with particular pupils, and so forth—that justify

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a concluding statement about action to be taken. "When it is argued that research has benefit for practice, the criterion of benefit should be the improvement of these practical arguments. [Evidence from research can] initiate the process of modifying the premises of the practical argument in the mind of the teacher" (Fenstermacher, pp. 44, 53), though alone it cannot determine any particular course of action.

To see in more detail how evidence from research can play this role, consider Bateson's distinction between two ways of perfecting adaptive action: learning from feedback and learning by recalibration (1979, pp. 195-202; Bateson & Bateson, 1987, pp. 42-49). His most familiar example contrasts the two mechanisms of control in a home heating system: one (using feedback) that turns the furnace off and on, moment to moment, in response to information about a deviation from a preset standard; the other that recalibrates that standard when the householder is dissatisfied with the resulting temperature control over some period of time.

Bateson's most detailed example is from a less familiar domain: learning to hunt with a rifle (using feedback) vs. a shotgun (by means of recalibration). Evidently, with a rifle, the hunter looks down the sight, corrects his aim, corrects his overcorrection, and shoots only when receiving information that he is on target. "The only relevant information is the error of the immediate moment. He does not need to change *himself*" (Bateson, 1979, p. 200, emphasis in the original). With a shotgun, by contrast, aiming and firing is a single act, and the hunter cannot afford a second glance. Here the knowledge available for learning depends on information from repeated performances, from carrying forward information about previous actions and outcomes and "ideally ... information about the *difference* between what happened" in subsequent rounds (p. 200, emphasis in the original).

Bateson's third example is closest to teaching: how a policeman decides which drivers to stop for violations of rules of the road. Leaving aside matters of equal treatment under the law, a policeman could use his moment-to-moment judgment about when a driver was driving so as to endanger others, based on intuitive response to speed or other features of a particular car's performance in particular traffic conditions. More realistically, the policeman's actions are calibrated by instructions that in turn are influenced by pressures from the rising price of oil or research evidence on a general relationship between speed and accidents. In all three examples, the critical distinction is between (a) using feedback only from the action in progress and (b) integrating knowledge about a set of similar actions under varied conditions.

In the best case scenario, a teacher uses both learning modes. She has calibrated her approach to classroom situations over years of teaching, accumulating what Schon (1983) calls exemplars—tacitly understood representations of past actions that comprise her intuitive knowledge about how to teach. But she also receives feedback on what is happening at the moment, gauges what is possible in the particular circumstance and makes instantaneous adjustments, and so alters and adds to her repertoire of intuited knowledge about what works and when. She both gets immediate feedback that influences how she conducts her lesson plans for the day and recalibrates the unconscious patterning of past learning each time she performs in class. That's the ideal.

In the more likely case, the teacher gets feedback on the success of a particular strategy, but not on her body of knowledge about teaching and learning that calibrates those strategies. For a teacher, just getting feedback about how to preserve a steady state in the variable conditions of practice is infinitely more complex than the dichotomous on/off of the thermostat. And recalibration in Bateson's terms, or changing the premises of her practical argument in Fenstermacher's terms, is a more complex process than in any of Bateson's examples.

Teacher research, or classroom inquiry as it is sometimes called, may be an important aid in this process. To engage in it, the teacher takes time out from the demands for action in an immediate, ongoing situation, and—alone or with colleagues—reflects on her practice outside the flow of events, in frozen time. She finds ways to collect for such reflection documentation of her teaching and of student learning, and articulates to herself the underlying practical arguments that are often not consciously known. She can thereby subject her knowledge to closer scrutiny and can make deeper changes, recalibrations, than during the pressures of ongoing practice.

Teacher Research on Writing

A review of four recent edited volumes, all published in 1987, provides a glimpse of what teacher research is about (Naso, 1988). The studies originated at three in-service teacher education sites: the Bread Loaf School of English (Goswami & Stillman, 1987), Northeastern University's Summer Institute on Writing (Bissex & Bullock, 1987), and the Northern Virginia Writing Project (Mohr & MacLean, 1987; *Research in Writing*, 1987). In the four publications of these sites, there are thirty-six teacher research accounts (plus three proposals and one report of a teacher/researcher collaboration).

There is no reason to conclude that these reports represent all current teacher research. Each of these "home" groups may emphasize certain topics or particular approaches to research. Nevertheless, three of these publications are the most available collections of teacher research reports, and so will

influence how others understand the areas of teacher research concern and its perceived benefits.(2)

With respect to overall *focus*, the thirty-six reports are almost evenly divided into two categories. In some, the teacher's intention seems to be to solve a problem or test out a new teaching idea. For example, Victoria Holmsten (in Goswami & Stillman) asks whether microcomputers improve writing in her high school English class. In others, there is a more open-ended orientation toward research, in which the teacher follows and describes learners or classroom events. For example, Carol Avery (in Bissex & Bullock) provides a detailed case study of a learning disabled child.

Specific *topics* can be grouped into three categories. Two-thirds of the studies address familiar questions of learning and teaching composition—such as teacher student conferences and the role of revision. In Mohr & MacLean, Betsy Sanford reports that her fourth-grade students seemed not to apply the "body of revision skills" she had taught them. Seven of the studies focus on the use of writing to explore meaning. In *Research in Writing*, Bernadette Glaze Mulholland discusses the use of learning logs in her tenth-grade humanities class. Four studies are about student reports in other content areas. For example, also in *Research in Writing*, Judy Christian, an elementary school librarian, studied the movement from personal writing to informational writing as students prepared reports about ancient Rome.

With respect to research *findings*, or what appear to be the main points the teacher author derives from the study, the reports again fall almost evenly into two categories. In about half, the authors emphasize their deeper and clearer understanding of learning, the use of classroom time, or the needs of their students. For example, in Goswami & Stillman, Gail Martin explains her changed thinking about the writing apprehension she observed among her Arapaho students. And in Bissex & Bullock, Susan Kaplan considers how close attention to her own learning benefits her teaching. Other reports conclude with the author's highlighting the effects of particular classroom practices or arguing that a certain teaching approach really works. So Avery's case study of the learning disabled child ends with a strong statement of the advantages of placing Traci in a "writing process" classroom.

Aside from these differences in focus, topic, and findings, we notice differences among teacher-researchers in their reporting style. The following questions represent some of the decisions teacher-researchers seem to make about how to report their work.

Does the report highlight insights primarily about learning and teaching or about changes in the teacher-researcher? The narrative form that is prevalent in teacher research reports forces writers to assume roles in their own stories. As a feature of ethnographic writing more generally, this is controversial; first-person narration can shift readers' attention inappropriately from the world as observed to the observer's experience. But in the case of teacher

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Editor's Note

I know there are no final drafts, but reality is both a harsh and pragmatic foil to that knowledge—publication deadlines are empirically testable and a writer's patience for revision has its sensible limits. I think that the process we experience as writing teachers and researchers falls in parallel with this familiar irony, for as we engage in the ever-evolving process of refining theories and redefining ourselves and our goals, we fix on circumscriptions in order to achieve the business of the day—the classroom lesson, the research project, the administrative task. As with writing, it is this daily doing that invigorates and renews the evolutionary churning. Two concerns that seem to be evolving palpably in the writing profession form the core of this issue of The Quarterly*—one is teacher research in writing; the other is writing assessment. To enact each of these, we fix on definitions of what they are and what they are to achieve, yet enactment fuels dialogue, and so we continue to reshape and redefine our premises and our ends.*

Courtney Cazden, Judy Diamondstone, and Paul Naso illustrate this process when they ponder the roles and relationships of university researchers and teacher researchers, showing how teacher research as well as university research are evolving constructs that work in concert with daily enactments. In separate responses to their ideas, Susan Florio-Ruane and Carl Bereiter reshape and redefine Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso—and the dialogue comes full circle. Charles Cooper and Beth Breneman discuss a major writing assessment project in California, the fruit of much research, much changed thought about the reason for and goals of writing assessment, yet the project they describe swirls in the eddy of evolving theory and so is not a final, but the latest enactment of a process to which the authors continually contribute, along with cadres of writing teachers and researchers.

In this issue also, H. Fil Dowling, Jr., reports on Towson State University's writing-across-the-curriculum consortium, which evolves side by side with the Maryland Writing Project. Dixie Dellinger reviews Jim Moffett's Storm in the Mountain, *and Harold Nelson reviews Steve Tollefson's* Grammar Grams. *We wish you happy reading!*

—M.S.

Susan Florio-Ruane

Research, Recalibration, and Conversation: A Response to Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso

I would like to begin with the idea that research—in this case on the teaching of writing—helps teachers to recalibrate their thinking and transform their action. This idea is considerably more complex than the common sense assumption that practice is routinized and responsive to change simply on the basis of moment-to-moment feedback. Though this assumption is to some extent the case, there is far more involved in practice than routines and feedback. Because of the complexity of practice, research has the potential to make a difference in how teachers think about and proceed with their work.

Central to Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso's paper is the idea that changes in the premises of teachers' practical arguments can be brought about by teachers' engagement in research. While the authors acknowledge that the concept of "practical arguments" (Fenstermacher, 1986) is controversial, they proceed from that idea to Bateson's very powerful metaphor of "recalibration"—changes in "the unconscious patterning of past learning" derived from thought and action. I will return in the conclusion of my paper to the idea of practical arguments as a way of understanding teacher thinking.

That Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso selected research on the teaching of writing as the domain in which to examine the idea of recalibration is probably not accidental. Their report of teacher research on writing in the United States parallels John Elliot's (1988) description of teacher research on the Humanities in Great Britain. In each case, teacher research seems to arise out of efforts to reform existing curricula or to specify a curriculum where one has been ill-defined. Another such example is the Michigan State University Written Literacy Forum of which I was a part from 1981-1987. There we found that writing was rich territory for teachers' research and curricular reform efforts. Writing in the schools we studied was the least constrained part of the school curriculum. It had few school district mandates or purchased materials, and teachers, therefore, had the mixed blessing of creating their own curriculum. Research on new and existing practices enabled them in this effort (Florio-Ruane & Dunn, 1987).

In the United States, contemporary teacher research on writing has not arisen independently from research within the university. Research on the teaching of elementary school writing was generously funded by the National Institute of Education in the 1970s, and many requests for proposals required researchers to demonstrate that teachers would be involved in their work in a variety of collaborative roles. In addition, teacher education movements such as the National Writing Project supported teachers' inquiry into their own writing and teaching practices. Finally, the popular "process approach" to writing captured the imaginations of both teachers looking to fill the curricular void and researchers interested in the cognitive processes underlying text production.

Despite the proliferation of research on writing and its instruction by both teachers and university researchers, however, the writing curriculum remains underspecified and underconceptualized. This point has been made elsewhere (Applebee, 1986; Florio-Ruane & Lensmire, in press), but Cazden and her co-authors underscore this point with examples of the kinds of questions being asked by teacher-researchers. Teachers use research, in part, to try to figure out what should be taught, why it should be taught, and how they can teach it.

As Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso demonstrate, some of the most interesting of these questions are being pursued, not by university-based researchers, but by teacher-researchers. One teacher whose work is described in one of the published reports they cite is Kathleen Hogan. She is studying the dilemma of topic selection in freshman composition. She asks in this regard when a teacher-assigned topic pushes students to expect more of themselves than self-chosen topics do (Hogan, 1987). On the related matter of response to writing, Ferguson McKay, another teacher whose work is published in the same report, is researching writing conferences as instructional talk and wondering just how it is that students learn complex cognitive processes like revision by means of conversational give and take. McKay is interested

in contrasting the functions of "direct instruction" with "encouragement" in those conferences (McKay, 1987). Delpit, cited by Cazden and her co-authors, describes teacher researchers who raised difficult questions about language instruction and policy. Her work suggests that assumptions made about student and teacher norms, values, and background knowledge underlying the process approach to writing might reflect only those of the dominant social group. This possibility is reminiscent of Basil Bernstein's (1977) critique of open education. Bernstein suggested that in the open education movement, the ordinary norms of schooling had not, in fact, been changed. They had simply gone "underground." Now made even less explicit—yet still assumed by teachers—the norms organizing schooling were even less accessible to those students whose outside school experience did not prepare them for school's norms. It may be that practitioners need to raise such questions about the writing process movement because it leaves open to discussion by teachers and students alike the normative and instructional nature of talk about text in school.

The Multiple Uses of Teacher Research

A key idea developed in Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso's paper concerns the variety of ways research can help teachers recalibrate their understandings of practice. It is notable that most of the instances of recalibration that the authors refer to would not be possible if there were not occasions and forums for communicating teacher research. Sufficient published teacher research exists for the authors to have conducted a review and classification of it. They have been able to identify important features of the research and show variation within it. This published research also forms a body of literature for teachers to read and share. Moreover, it can serve to influence not only teaching practice and teacher research, but the research agendas of universities and funding agencies. Finally, the findings of teacher research, once they have entered the body of published knowledge, are available for wide discussion, scrutiny, and debate.

Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso demonstrate that teachers participate in research in numerous ways. In fact, their examples make university-based researchers' views of dissemination or knowledge utilization seem modest at best and anemic at worst. According to the authors, teachers inquire into their own practices. They also change their practices and monitor the effects of those changes. They deliberate about practice with others using a variety of studies to negotiate among possible instructional and curricular alternatives. They also collaborate with university researchers. In all cases, research seems lively and connected to teachers' work.

In these varied uses of research there are promises and pitfalls, and the authors bring many of them to light. They stress the freshness of teacher research in which new knowledge and insight are often reported in first person and narrative. The authors also make the intriguing observation that teachers learn not only (or not necessarily best) from studies of the familiar, but from studies of the strange. In making this point, the authors take issue with popular claims that the ethnographic case study or the self-report of practice might be the optimum type of practitioner research.

Research can be both familiar and strange—it can start with very routine and ordinary concerns and open doors to vastly new ways of thinking about practice.

Because schools and schooling are familiar and a great deal of their social and academic order is invisible to us, even good ethnographic research must strive to "make the familiar strange." Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso prompt us to think about the value of altering our perspective, or interrupting our usual ways of thinking or acting, as essential to recalibration. With this idea in hand, one might learn from experiments, surveys, interviews, case studies of others' teaching, cases written from a child's perspective, and so forth. One exciting example that Cazden and her co-authors mention is the linguistic research on invented spelling by Read, C. Chomsky, and others (e.g., Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982; Teale & Sulzby, 1986). In my own work, I have witnessed the way this research transforms beginning and experienced teachers' interpretations of young children's texts, their thoughts about meaning, and their sense of instructional response precisely because it takes the familiar, that is, children's written work, and places it in new relief. Teachers begin to see errors not as mistakes to be laboriously corrected, but as clues to children's emergent development (Florio-Ruane, 1988).

Research can be both familiar and strange—it can start with very routine and ordinary concerns and open doors to vastly new ways of thinking about practice. Elliot (1988), for example, describes teachers who began a study of "wait time" trying to stretch the time they would give students to think and answer questions during discussion. This study led to teachers' reconceptualizing classroom dialogue entirely. As Cazden and her co-authors have said, in the best instances, "a teacher uses both learning modes"—feedback and recalibration. It is likely that teacher-initiated studies interweave these, sometimes beginning with instructional behavior and working toward broader and deeper issues of pedagogy. It is exciting to think about how university researchers could design studies which would serve the same purpose and speak more meaningfully to teaching and teachers.

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Research, Recalibration, and Conversation

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Cazden (1988) has elsewhere referred to recalibration in other terms. She discusses the need to override the "default" mode when teaching—the need to interrupt our usual tendencies to make sense of what is happening only in particular culturally-patterned ways. This interruption slows down the swiftness of instruction and pupil assessment and adds more time to think. But it also opens up the possibility of having new thoughts about what is happening—teaching's interpretive frames can be broken by research (both of the teacher and the researcher brand). For example:

- teachers take time out from the flow of events to think and rethink them;
- teachers collect information from their practice to view repeatedly in the "empty classroom" (children's work samples, photographs, videotapes and audiotapes);
- teachers engage in dialogue and deliberation about parts of teaching that might have become routinized during years of practice;
- teachers subject their knowledge to scrutiny and change—they become more skeptical about the answers to pedagogical questions deriving from either research or common sense.

All of these activities are part of the inquiry process whether undertaken by a teacher or a social scientist. As Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso illustrate, Betsy Sanford studied an ordinary practical problem of application of revision skills which were to be learned from teacher feedback during writing conferences. But, during the research process, her attention shifted. She began to study not the application of teacher-taught skills, but the process of student problem-solving during composition.

Kathleen Hogan's aforementioned study challenged the assumptions of many process-oriented writing researchers about the desirability of student topic selection. She wondered in her inquiry when it makes instructional sense to permit students to select their own topics and when it does not. Similarly, Ferguson McKay wondered about the differences between direct instruction and encouragement in writing conferences. These teachers are conducting research which may extend or transform their own work and that of university-based researchers as well. Everyone's practice needs recalibration.

The Social Organization of Teacher Research—and Some Thoughts on Practical Arguments

I want to close my response to Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso's paper with some thoughts about contemplation, conversation, and knowledge use on what the authors call the "battlefield of curricular reform." Teacher research, as the authors assert, can be lonely and risky (especially in the United States, where the individual teacher and not the school faculty tends to be the research unit). Teachers who take part in research may see themselves as marginal or alienated from colleagues. The teacher-researcher movement may unhealthily (and unwittingly) encourage isolation from peers to the extent that teachers work with university researchers rather than with one another. In addition, it is hard to create and institutionalize new and enduring social forms—or forums—for teachers to work together or for groups of teachers and university-based researchers to form coalitions. Devaluing of teachers' knowledge and ways of representing it may isolate teachers from social scientists, administrators, and policy-makers. Given this state of affairs (which is driven by and supportive of stratification in the education field), teachers' research may be pressed to reify uncritically the prescriptive claims of university researchers.

Ironically, the authors adopt at the outset of their paper a "practical argument" view of teacher thought and action which may intensify some of these problems. One of the few but fundamental difficulties I find in their paper is that their rich portrayal of teacher research—its content, purposes, and usefulness—does not map well onto their initial premise. The authors begin by embracing Fenstermacher's idea that teachers operate from practical arguments. Upon this claim they build the idea that changes in the premises of teachers' practical arguments (and hence in their practice) can be brought about by engagement in research. In my view, the idea that practical action emanates from practical arguments grossly oversimplifies practice and research.

As critics of Fenstermacher's view have noted, "argumentation" may, in fact, be a misleading or inappropriate metaphor for the discursive process by which problems are framed and action taken. In addition, practical reasoning seems to assume the utility of knowledge. That assumption may well exaggerate the authority or correctness of social science knowledge. The idea that practical arguments lead directly to action seems to leave out the contemplative dimension of teaching. Not all thought can or should lead to practical action—particularly in areas where our knowledge is uncertain, our goals are not clearly specified, means/ends relationships are difficult to fix, there may be competing goods among which we must choose, and our professional judg-

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Carl Bereiter

Beyond Lived Experience in Writing Research

In comparing teacher research and researcher research, Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso have emphasized the gap and potential complementarity of these two research enterprises, saying little about the alliance that is already developing between teacher-researchers and certain kinds of researcher-researchers. I want to focus on this emerging alliance and to highlight what are to me deeply troublesome aspects of it.

Teacher research, as Cazden and her co-authors indicate, deals with lived experience. When successful it leads to reflection upon and deeper understanding of experience. In this enterprise teacher-researchers are joined by researcher-researchers who adopt such labels as *phenomenological*, *ethnographic*, and *interpretive*—researchers whose focus is also on lived experience and its coherent interpretation.

I am not about to question the value of such interpretive activity. To do so would be to question the value of the humanities and to imply that the unexamined life is the life one should be living. Teacher-researchers and researcher-researchers have also accomplished practical good by advancing some truly promising educational reforms. Their work has heavily influenced the reading and writing program that a group of fellow cognitive scientists and I have been developing and which we hope will bring more active approaches to learning into the mainstream of elementary education.

The problems lie at a deeper level. The history of science is the history of a gradual transition from theories that interpret "molar experience," as Brewer calls it, to theories that capture underlying lawfulness. Children in their own cognitive development must go through this same transition—from conceptions of the world grounded in how things look and feel to conceptions grounded in natural law. It would be ironic if teachers, whose job it is to help students make this transition, were in their own professional knowledge bound to the level of molar experience.

Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso emphasize the value of researcher-research in providing insights from a larger context than the teacher's own situation. I see this as more than a matter of enabling teachers to view their own experiences within a larger framework. It is also a matter of enabling teachers to move subjective experience away from the center of what they are trying to understand.

There are many kinds of research that move beyond the level of molar experience, but I will discuss only two that have particular relevance to current research on the teaching of writing.

Process-Product Research

Comparative studies of educational outcomes, once the stock in trade of educational research, have lately acquired such a bad name that their importance in the overall scheme of educational decision-making needs to be reiterated. Following Fenstermacher, Cazden and her co-authors consider teachers' decisions to be based on practical arguments. These practical arguments include both value claims and empirical claims. Often the empirical claims are ones that teacher-researchers alone have no way to test.

Current arguments in favor of encouraging beginning writers to use invented spelling illustrate this point. One empirical claim is that children using invented spelling will gradually adopt the phoneme-grapheme correspondence of standard orthography. This claim teachers can test and have tested for themselves. But there are other claims about benefits to reading and writing abilities that cannot be validly tested under the usual conditions of schooling. For one thing, teachers who opt for invented spelling usually do so as part of a "writing process" package that includes a large increase in time devoted to writing, changes in the social context of

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writing, and so on. Observed benefits might have nothing to do with invented spelling.

Linda Clarke (in press) was able to locate first-grade classes in Ontario where essentially the same writing program was in place—thirty minutes each day devoted to writing, using a writing process approach—but with some teachers encouraging invented spelling and others pressing for correct spelling. The comparative results were on the whole favorable to the empirical claims made by advocates of invented spelling. Inventive spellers did write longer compositions, and there was evidence of positive transfer to tests of reading and spelling. There were some surprises, however: global ratings of writing quality did not reveal differences, inventive spellers did not use a more varied vocabulary, and the reading benefits were limited to children with low entering abilities.

These and other findings from Clarke's study raise educationally significant questions calling for further research. What strikes me as strange and alarming is that, after almost a decade of intense interest in invented spelling, this should be apparently the first and only study to have investigated the variety of important empirical issues that can only be addressed through comparative experiments. I do not see how knowledge can advance within the teacher research-researcher research coalition if it does not show a keener interest in evaluating its empirical claims.

Research on Cognitive Processes

Explaining how the mind handles the complexities of written composition is a challenging problem that has engaged the efforts of a number of researchers. This has provoked something of a clash of cultures. Many people in the language arts are violently unsympathetic to the idea of regarding the mind as a device whose workings are amenable to lawful explanation. This is not the place to debate the scientific issues. Let us just say that the cognitive psychology of writing is a specialty interest, like many other specialty interests that converge on the phenomena of writing—the history of writing systems, for instance, and the study of anaphora. One can be a successful teacher of writing without such specialized knowledge, but it does enrich one's background, providing resources that may prove valuable in unpredictable ways.

The alliance that has developed between teacher-researchers and researcher-researchers is an alliance based on a strong feeling for the humane values of written expression. At least on the part of some of the researcher-researchers, however, this feeling seems to be accompanied by the aforesaid aversion to poking into how the mind works. They read into cognitive research all sorts of prescriptive and value implications that aren't there.

Explaining how the mind handles the complexities of written composition is a challenging problem that has engaged the efforts of a number of researchers.

This leads to a coterie mentality and an exclusiveness that I fear will prove damaging to the progress of writing instruction. It limits the circle of teacher-researchers to those who share a certain value orientation. As we know, not all teachers have a passion for writing. Some teachers have scientific interests, and they might be drawn into an interest in writing as an intriguing scientific problem. Others might become involved with writing as a medium for inquiry into students' thinking and learning processes. Such teachers, I fear, have little prospect of gaining support as teacher-researchers from the emerging coalition.

More serious, however, is the exclusion of students. As Marlene Scardamalia and I have tried to show in a variety of studies (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987), young writers can become intensely interested in studying their own cognitive processes in writing. It is a kind of study in which student-researchers, teacher-researchers, and researcher-researchers can join as genuine co-investigators. I do not see that possibility in the sorts of teacher research that Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso find to be going on. Students are excluded, not by design, but because the research is aimed at interpreting or validating the world as experienced by the teacher, and this is an enterprise in which students can hardly be expected to participate as investigators. Writing research would be both enriched and liberalized by a more scientific view, which recognizes the possibility of explaining writing phenomena in terms not bound to the subjective experience of the explainer.

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Carl Bereiter is a professor at the Center for Applied Cognitive Science at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto. He is author with Marlene Scardamalia of The Psychology of Written Composition *(Erlbaum, 1987).*

Charles Cooper and Beth Breneman

California's New Writing Assessment

If one were to imagine an effective statewide writing assessment designed to improve writing instruction in the public schools, certain criteria would immediately come to mind. One might imagine that such a program would raise standards and expectations for achievement in writing. It would be a teacher-centered program with teachers creating the assessment materials, scoring the essays, and teaching other teachers to use the results. It would broaden the kinds of reading and writing assigned in school classrooms. It would reflect research on effective writing instruction and still correspond with teachers' understandings about writing development. It would receive public attention encouraging entire school communities to work together to promote better learning. And it would provide practical materials and associated staff development activities to help teachers with classroom writing instruction. Such a program is already in place in California at two grade levels.

In the spring of 1987, California's first annual statewide direct writing assessment was conducted in grade eight by the California Assessment Program (California's state-mandated testing program for grades three, six, eight, and twelve). Soon to follow was California's first annual statewide writing assessment in grade twelve—introduced in the winter of 1988. For the first time, California's educators, legislators, and citizens were to be provided annually with data on the actual writing achievement of virtually all students in the state at two grade levels (approximately 500,000 students). A direct writing assessment in grade six is currently planned for statewide implementation in 1990-91. In previous years only multiple-choice tests of written language skills were administered as part of the California Assessment Program (CAP).

California's new English-Language Arts Framework asserts that students should be carefully taught to read and compose many different types of discourse to prepare them for higher education, the job market, and citizenship in a democracy.

California's new writing assessment system is both a test and an instructional support program. It has five major purposes:

> to assess the implementation of the *English Language Arts Framework*, *Model Curriculum Guide K-8*, and *Model Curriculum Standards 9-12* in California's secondary schools;
>
> to establish standards of excellence for eight important types of writing and thinking at each grade level tested;
>
> to monitor writing achievement in California's junior and senior high schools, detecting any decline or improvement in achievement at grades eight and twelve;
>
> to encourage more writing and more types of writing in California classrooms;
>
> to make available to teachers state-of-the-art information about the teaching of writing.

Test Administration and Design

The CAP writing assessment is administered as part of the battery of tests constituting CAP's comprehensive *Survey of Academic Skills: Grade 8* and *Survey of Academic Skills: Grade 12*. In a matrix sampling design, the prompts are distributed randomly so that each student has the same

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chance as any other student of receiving any one of several prompts in each type of writing assessed. Examiners are instructed to allow a full forty-five minutes of uninterrupted writing time for completion of the essay. Essay booklets are then returned for scoring to the primary contractor of the project, Educational Testing Service (ETS).

Matrix sampling, in which each student takes only a fraction of a total test in any given content area, has been used on all CAP tests since 1973-74. This technique is extremely efficient because it requires less time for testing, results in broad coverage of the curriculum, and yields more stable results for reporting to groups (schools and districts) and more information that teachers can use to evaluate and strengthen curricula. Matrix sampling does not provide scores for individual students. The most important virtue of such tests—even beyond efficiency and reliability—is their potential to achieve breadth and balance in content coverage. This factor is especially apparent in the assessment of writing.

California's new *English-Language Arts Framework* asserts that students should be carefully taught to read and compose many different types of discourse to prepare them for higher education, the job market, and citizenship in a democracy. We believe that matrix sampling is an ideal testing strategy for an assessment designed to promote systematic instruction in a wide variety of types of writing and thinking.

CAP's Writing Assessment Advisory Committee identified eight types of writing to be phased into the test over a three-year period in grade eight: (l) report of information; (2) problem solution; (3) autobiographical incident; (4) evaluation; (5) story; (6) first-hand biography; (7) observational writing; and (8) speculation about causes or effects. The first four types were assessed in 1987. Story and first-hand biography were added in 1988, and observational writing and speculation about causes or effects were added in 1989.

The committee created a similar eight-type plan for grade twelve: (l) autobiographical incident; (2) reflective essay; (3) interpretation; (4) evaluation; (5) controversial issue; (6) report of information; (7) observational writing; and (8) speculation about causes or effects.

In selecting the types of writing to be included in the assessment, the committee began by making a comprehensive list of the types of writing that would be desirable in a complete junior high and high school writing curriculum. This list covered a broad range of types, including personal, expository (explanatory), presentational (imaginative), and persuasive writing. The following criteria were used in selecting the eight types of writing for both grade levels:

Emphasis of the best school writing programs. Would California's best teachers of writing at a certain grade be likely to assign a particular type of writing?

Students' reading experiences. Would many students have been reading the types of writing on the list?

Students' cognitive development. Would students be developmentally ready to engage in a particular type of writing?

Curriculum sequence between grades three and twelve. Would a grade-level set of writing types appropriately follow an earlier set and at the same time prepare students for a later set? What kinds of writing and thinking are needed for success in other disciplines, such as history-social science and science?

Appropriateness for testing. Would it be fair to expect students to compose a given type of writing in a forty-five-minute testing period?

It is important to note, we think, that each type of writing to be assessed at grades eight and twelve is a widely recognized genre. All kinds of writers in or out of school rely on these (and other) genres to fulfill their rhetorical purposes in particular writing situations. A genre is a social construct that has evolved over time to meet writers' needs in recurring and now familiar writing situations. While there can be wide variation of form and strategy within a genre, readers and writers in a culture recognize paradigmatic instances.

Current discourse theory and writing teachers' experience confirm that each of the types of writing CAP assesses requires of students a special way of thinking and composing. They must solve unique problems; think critically in an appropriately focused way; seriously consider their readers' knowledge, expectations, and attitudes; and use information, memories, or arguments in particular ways.

Prompts

Once the types of writing were selected for grades eight and twelve, prompts were developed for each type. For this purpose, the Department of Education, in collaboration with Educational Testing Service, created a team of test developers, the CAP Writing Development Team. This group of extraordinary California classroom teachers was specially selected by the California Writing Project, the California Literature Project, and the Department of Education to provide leadership in test development and staff development activities. Charles Cooper, of the University of California, San Diego, facilitates the work of the Team.

Current discourse theory and writing teachers' experience confirm that each of the types of writing CAP assesses requires of students a special way of thinking and composing.

The members of the CAP Writing Development Team developed many prompts for each type of writing to be tested. Each prompt divides into two parts: a writing situation and directions for writing. An illustrative grade eight prompt designed to assess problem-solution writing follows:

Writing Situation

A recent survey taken at your school shows that students are not reading many books for pleasure. Students read what teachers assign, but students don't often choose or buy books to read on their own. The school principal has shared the results of the survey with the Parent-Teacher Club, whose members are concerned about this problem. The parents want to know why students aren't reading and would like some suggestions for ways of solving the problem.

Directions for Writing

Write an article for the Parent-Teacher Club's newsletter about the problem of students' not reading books for pleasure. Identify the problem and present it so that your readers will understand its seriousness. Offer one or more solutions. Because certain parents and teachers may not be ready to accept your solution, try to convince everyone that your solution is reasonable and will work.

The writing situation orients students to the type of writing and gives them a specific topic or a choice of topics. It focuses students' thinking and helps them anticipate rhetorical problems they must solve.

The directions for writing suggest requirements and features of the essay—without being prescriptive or formulaic. The directions provide a purpose for the essay, and they always mention readers, sometimes identifying a particular reader, at other times merely referring to general readers' expectations or needs.

Teachers' and students' responses to the prompts are central to the field-testing process. For example, in one early field test of prompts, the California Writing Project asked eighty outstanding teachers to give a prompt to at least fifty students, help the students complete a student questionnaire, examine the student essays and questionnaires, conduct student interviews about the prompt and the students' difficulties with it, summarize the information on teacher questionnaires for the prompt, and return the materials for the scrutiny of the CAP Writing Development Team. All prompts continue to be field-tested in this way, though now with approximately 200 students writing to each prompt.

Through its eighteen-site network, the California Writing Project is also inviting teachers to submit new prompts.

Scoring System

The scoring system developed for the CAP writing assessment was tailored to the eight types of writing assessed at each grade level. Each essay produced in the assessment is scored for (1) rhetorical effectiveness, which focuses on the special thinking and writing requirements for each type of writing; (2) a general feature, such as coherence, style, elaboration, or concrete language important to the type of writing being assessed; and (3) conventions of usage, grammar, and spelling. School reports of the results allow teachers to compare student achievement on different types of writing and to assess instructional strengths and weaknesses.

Regional Scoring by Teachers

The essays are scored by teachers under the direction of ETS at regional scoring centers throughout California. Junior high teachers score the eighth-grade papers in July, while high school teachers evaluate the twelfth-grade papers in March. One or two types of writing are scored at each scoring center.

The teacher-readers, who are carefully selected by ETS, have demonstrated remarkable efficiency in scoring the essays. For example, in July 1987, 282,155 eighth-grade booklets were scored by 290 readers in eight days.

The participation of teachers in the readings is a crucial part of California's Writing Assessment Program. Not only does it give teachers authority over the evaluation of student writing, but it also provides valuable staff development for teachers. One of the chief readers, a member of the CAP Writing Development Team, captured the spirit of the CAP scoring sessions in a letter summarizing the group experience:

Now, weeks after the CAP reading for Report of Information in Los Angeles, the memory of teachers working together in a collegial atmosphere on a project we all want to succeed is still vivid and clear. Nothing could have prepared me for the exhilaration which came from evaluating and helping others to evaluate student work....

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> *Our readers were well-qualified, eager, and intelligent. For the most part, their feelings and ideas about CAP and the reading itself remained positive. Many readers noted that the most rewarding part of the reading, however, was meeting other teachers. Others remarked that "being able to see papers from across the state" was beneficial.*
>
> *The training materials used were excellent in all ways. The only complaints from the readers were that they could not take the materials home. Amid cries of "Let us keep the materials" and "Our schools need them," it was obvious that the readers found the training materials valuable and important to the scoring of the student papers as well as for future use....*
>
> *Throughout our days together, good people worked with excellent materials for a goal that is larger than all of us combined—to make excellent writers of all the students in California.*

Three-Tiered Reporting System

The results of the CAP writing assessment are reported annually in three ways: (l) in a special narrative report to teachers and principals; (2) in a school and district report designed for reporting to the public; and (3) in a state report that summarizes the writing achievement results for California. The first report to be sent out after each assessment, *A Report to Teachers on Writing Achievement*, is mailed directly to English teachers at each school site. It reports the percentage of a school's students scoring at each score point for rhetorical effectiveness, feature, and conventions in every type of writing assessed. This report is accompanied by sets of students' essays, illustrating student achievement at each rhetorical effectiveness score point in the writing types assessed.

The second report, a school and district report for CAP's *Survey of Academic Skills, Writing Achievement*, is designed for reporting to the public, for making district and school comparisons, and for charting year-to-year progress.

Completing the three-tiered system is the state report which contains California's writing achievement results for all types of writing assessed including annotated illustrative essays, a comparison of achievement results among the types of writing, interpretation, and discussion of overall writing achievement results, year-to-year changes, and recommendations for teachers, administrators, parents, and teacher educators.

Instructional Materials

Because the new CAP writing assessment represents a major departure for the California Assessment Program, the CAP Writing Development Team developed materials to help districts prepare for the new writing test. To meet this practical need, the Team created the *Writing Assessment Handbook: Grade Eight* and the *Writing Assessment Handbook: Grade Twelve*.

The handbooks were intended to serve many audiences within the educational community. They include a program overview for all audiences; management guidelines for administrators; a chapter on writing assessment and the curriculum for curriculum specialists, administrators, and teachers; a chapter on students with special needs for teachers and administrators responsible for ethnically and linguistically diverse populations; and transparency masters to meet the communication needs of workshop presenters.

Most important, the handbooks include a chapter (called a writing guide) for every type of writing assessed. Each writing guide provides practical information for teachers: a definition of that type of writing, an explanation of its importance, characteristics of that writing type, exemplary student essays, an example of a student's writing process, classroom writing assignments, a published example of the writing type, and a rhetorical effectiveness scoring guide. These handbooks were mailed to every junior high or high school in the state. They have provided a useful starting point for many staff development workshops.

The CAP writing assessment and the writing guides are based on theory and research and a definition of writing that challenges what James Britton called in *The Development of Writing Abilities* (ll-18) the "naive global sense of the ability to write." In *Research on Written Composition*, George Hillocks reports that the use of good pieces of writing as models remains an effective way to teach writing. Hillocks also reports that "scales, criteria, and specific questions which students apply to their own or others' writing also have a powerful effect on enhancing quality" (p. 249).

Staff Development

Leadership in staff development to help schools prepare for the CAP writing assessment has been provided by the CAP Writing Development Team, the California Writing Project, the California Literature Project, and county offices of education throughout the state.

One of the largest and most cooperative staff development efforts was initiated by a state-funded "training of trainers" conference conducted by the California Writing Project and sponsored by the Office of Staff Development and the Cur-

riculum Implementation Center for English-Language Arts.

This special training of trainers conference was held in September, 1986, to inform staff development agencies statewide about the CAP assessment; its dimensions, purposes, and benefits; and its congruence with the *English-Language Arts Framework*. The intent of the conference was to develop a corps of trainers to train educators statewide on the fundamentals of the CAP assessment. A total of 123 representatives from offices of county superintendents of schools and California Writing Project sites attended the two-day training session. California Writing Project Teacher Consultants were prepared to teach a cadre of teachers at each of eighteen California Writing Project sites in October 1986, in preparation for staff development requests from schools and school districts statewide. Through the efforts of the California Writing Project, 7,304 teachers were involved in CAP in-service activities within six months—a number that accounts for over half of the grade eight teachers in the state. Since this initial state-funded effort, the California Writing Project has continued to provide staff development for the CAP writing assessment through its on-going, multiple-session in-service series with local schools and school districts for both eighth and twelfth grades.

Extensive staff development activities have also been provided through the California Literature Project. Five hundred teachers, K-12, representing each of the state's six county superintendent areas, attended the 1989 summer institutes of the California Literature Project. This, the fifth CLP institute held on California State University campuses, brought the number of teachers intensively trained in the research base and implementation strategies for the *English Language Arts Framework* to 1,250. Included as an integral part of the training is the concept of classroom assessment that incorporates key features from the CAP writing assessment. Advanced training for California Literature Project teachers has helped prepare teacher/leaders to conduct teacher-to-teacher workshops on writing assessment.

Results, 1987-88, Grade 8

The grade eight test was administered in April of 1987 and 1988. When it was administered again in April of 1989 all eight types of writing were assessed, completing the full assessment plan. Each type of writing was assessed through ten prompts, about half of them from previous years, the other half new from recent field tests. From its first administration in December of 1988, the grade twelve test will gradually realize a similar full plan.

Here we can sample the 1988 statewide grade eight results. (Recall that each school site and each district receives reports of its own students' achievement.) Considering statewide average scores, we concluded that grade eight students were most competent rhetorically at reporting information (fifty-two percent scored four or higher); less competent at autobiography and firsthand biography (forty and forty-two percent scored four or higher); noticeably less competent at story (thirty-three percent scored four or higher); and markedly less skilled at the two kinds of persuasive writing in this assessment: arguing for solutions to solve problems and to support their judgments (only twenty-eight and twenty-seven percent scored four or higher). Students had better control of conventions than of rhetorical strategies. For example, in writing evaluations, while only twenty-seven percent scored four or higher for rhetorical effectiveness, fully forty-five percent scored four or higher for conventions.

Since prompts for a type of writing vary by difficulty, results are scaled to a starting point of 250, so that achievement may be compared among schools and monitored from year to year at each school site. California's grade eight students improved in the four types of writing assessed in both 1987 and 1988. From a starting point of 250 in 1987, rhetorical effectiveness scaled scores rose in 1988 to 258 for autobiographical incident, 255 for evaluation, 260 for problem solution, and 254 for report of information. Scores also improved for general writing features and for conventions.

The statewide scaled score combining results for rhetorical effectiveness, features, and conventions in all types of writing rose from 250 to 256. Several schools made notable gains from 1987 to 1988, inviting our phone calls to develop case studies of school-site curriculum improvement and revitalized writing instruction. The cases confirm the recommendations we made in teacher and state reports. They also validate the assessment system: it is sensitive to improved instruction and accelerated writing achievement.

South Valley Junior High School (SVJH) in Gilroy, California, provides an example. Its overall scaled score increased thirty-one points, from 256 in 1987 to 287 in 1988. SVJH's student body of 1,152 is fifty-one percent Hispanic, forty-four percent Anglo, and five percent Black and Asian.

During the 1987-88 school year, teachers at SVJH launched a major effort to improve students' writing. Twenty-three core-subject teachers began meeting in September. (The "core" includes English and history/social studies and meets for two hours and twenty-five minutes daily.)

The core teachers first examined the state's Model Curriculum Standards for English Language Arts and the CAP writing types. Once a month from November through March, working with consultants from the Bay Area Writing Project, the core teachers completed five sessions of three hours each on integrating literature and writing. Throughout the year, the core teachers met once a week, sharing examples of student

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writing and classroom activities. Concurrently, all fifty-five teachers at the school completed five sessions with Bay Area Writing Project consultants on writing across the curriculum. On their own, the core teachers started meeting with teachers from other subjects and talking informally about the CAP types of writing within their subject field.

Two teachers attended the California Literature Project's 1987 summer institute and continued all year with institute follow-up activities. They brought back information which they shared with other teachers. (During the summer of 1988 they gave a workshop for other core teachers on the literary works to be taught during 1988-89.) Eight core teachers went to eight two-hour workshops on the CAP writing assessment offered by the Salinas County Office of Education.

Throughout the year, and in all of their inservice workshops, teachers relied on CAP's *Writing Assessment Handbook: Grade 8*. All core teachers have copies of the *Handbook*'s writing guides.

SVJH has a comprehensive writing-across-the-curriculum program. Samples of student writing from every class are posted on the bulletin board of the teachers' lounge to serve as an inspiration to other teachers in that subject area. In this way, one math teacher could see how another math teacher was using writing in class. SVJH sent teachers to writing seminars and sponsored a five-part writing across the curriculum in-service for *all* teachers and all aides, including those in the physical education department.

Administrators and teachers decided that the CAP Writing Assessment deserved special promotion. They installed "Good Luck on CAP!" banners in the halls a month before the assessment, and they served a special CAP breakfast for students the morning of the test.

Researching the Influence of the Assessment

As the assessment program got underway, Charles Cooper planned statewide surveys to ascertain the influence of the new assessment on curriculum and on teachers' practices. The California Assessment Program provided initial and follow-up funding and the Center for the Study of Writing joined as co-sponsor. A national advisory board of classroom teachers and survey specialists was formed, and Sandra Murphy (then at the Center for the Study of Writing and now at San Francisco State University) signed on as co-investigator. With advice from the advisory board and technical support from UC Berkeley's Survey Research Center, Cooper and Murphy developed questionnaires for one survey of junior high and middle school teachers and one of high school teachers.

The junior high survey sampled 600 teachers at California's 1500 junior high or middle schools. It was mailed in April 1988 just after the second statewide administration of the grade eight test, and, after follow ups, produced a sixty-five percent return. This survey asked teachers what they knew about the CAP Writing Assessment and how it had influenced their teaching and their school's language arts curriculum. First reports from this survey will appear in fall 1989. We believe it is the first study of the immediate effects of large-scale mandated assessment on curriculum and instruction. The high school survey sampled one teacher at each of California's 800 comprehensive high schools and one teacher at fifty of its 200 continuation high schools. It was mailed in September before the first December 1988 administration of the grade twelve test, and produced a seventy-five percent return. This survey is designed as a general status study, inquiring broadly into English teachers' preparation, professional activities, knowledge about writing, and classroom practices. It includes a few questions about the CAP Writing Assessment. Cooper and Murphy plan to repeat this questionnaire every four or five years to follow changes in the teaching of English in California's high schools.

Future Developments

Even as development of the present program continues—the grade eight assessment system will be in place with a revised *Handbook* and an adequate prompt bank by December 1989, the grade twelve system by July 1991—new programs and refinements of the present program are being planned. The Writing Development Team has been augmented by fourteen elementary classroom teachers who will take the lead in developing an integrated language arts assessment for grades three and six. As a starting point, CAP's English-Language Arts Advisory Committee has identified several types of writing to be field-tested for possible assessment at each grade level. Early prompt development and field testing will focus on tasks integrating assessment of reading, writing, revising, listening and talking, and collaborative learning. These tasks may take extended amounts of time. Some form of integrated assessment at grades three and six will be administered statewide in 1991.

As this challenging work gets underway, the Team will begin field testing integrated performance tasks for grades eight and twelve. Gradually, the grades eight and twelve writing tests will be extended toward comprehensive English language arts tests fully aligned with California's *English Language Arts Framework*.

These accomplishments and future developments place California in the forefront of large-scale writing assessment.

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A Sampling of New Publications from The Center for the Study of Writing

Technical Reports

30. Expanding the Repertoire: An Anthology of Practical Approaches for the Teaching of Writing — $5.00, 77 pages
Kathleen McCormick, editor (Reading-to-Write Report 11)

One important implication of the entire Reading-to-Write study is that students themselves should come into the act of examining their own reading and writing processes and becoming more aware of cognitive and cultural implications of their choices. This set of classroom approaches, written by teachers collaborating on a Reading-to-Write course that grew out of this project, introduces students to ways of exploring their assumptions and alternative ways of representing aspects of the task. May, 1989.

34. Planning in Writing: The Cognition of a Constructive Process — $4.00, 55 pages
Linda Flower, Karen A. Schriver, Linda Carey, Christina Haas, & John R. Hayes
(A joint report with the Carnegie Mellon Planning Project)

This paper describes the process adult writers bring to ill-defined expository tasks, such as writing essays, articles, reports, and proposals. It presents a theory of constructive planning based on a detailed analysis of expert and novice writers and suggests goals for instruction and the support of planning. July, 1989.

36. "Once-upon-a-Time" Reconsidered: The Developmental Dialectic Between Function and Form — $3.50, 30 pages
Anne Haas Dyson

Based on a three-year study of writing development in an urban magnet school, this essay traces the evolution of "once-upon-a-time" in a case-study child's classroom story writing. Dyson demonstrates how the story forms young children learn from others are not the end products, but the catalysts, of development. July, 1989.

Occasional Papers

9. Bridges: From Personal Writing to the Formal Essay — $3.00, 19 pages
James Moffett

Moffett discusses the transition from writing personal-experience themes to writing formal essays. As a framework for understanding this transition, he presents a schema that groups different writing types and shows their connections. As illustration, he includes examples of student writing from his anthology series *Active Voices*. March, 1989.

10. Contextual Complexities: Written Language Policies for Bilingual Programs — $3.00, 16 pages
Carole Edelsky & Sarah Hudelson

Because learning to write in school always happens in multiple and complex contexts, the authors argue for upper-level governmental policies for bilingual education that are broad and non-specific, linked to general goals, with local policies developed locally as the local situation dictates. June, 1989.

13. Must Teachers Also Be Writers? — $3.00, 17 pages
Vivian Gussin Paley

In this paper, Paley provides examples of her classroom experiences with kindergartners, showing how keeping a daily journal helps her to understand her students, their learning, and her own teaching. Says Paley: "Only as we write down our thoughts and observations may we question and argue with ourselves about the things we do and say." September, 1989.

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Center for the Study of Writing

University of California, Berkeley
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Publications Order Form

Technical Reports				
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2. Unintentional Helping in the Primary Grades: Writing in the Children's World	A.H. Dyson	$3.50		
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*A joint report with the Center for the Study of Reading

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+A joint report with the Carnegie Mellon Planning Project

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Books

Dixie G. Dellinger

STORM IN THE MOUNTAINS
hardcover and paperback
by James Moffett
Southern Illinois University Press, 1988

There are as many reasons to read James Moffett's new book, *Storm in the Mountains*, as there were to read his earlier ones, even though this one is totally different. For one reason, it is highly interesting reading, drawing one in deeper and deeper as it moves along. Next, it is a good history of the 1974 textbook controversy in Kanawha County, West Virginia, which has affected the content of textbooks ever since. Then, it holds a profound insight into the nature of the conservative mind, a most timely matter with the turn in that direction that seems now to be sweeping the country and the world. And finally—and most important of all—it brings out of the depths of our own consciousness, realizations about ourselves that we cannot afford to ignore.

Storm in the Mountains is subtitled "A Case Study of Censorship, Conflict, and Consciousness." A case is an instance of something. Part 1 lays out the story of the controversy which began in late 1973 and continued through 1974, culminating in strikes, boycotts of schools, violence, and fire-bombings. James Moffett was the well-meaning creator of one of the series of textbooks that the protestors objected to so violently. Part 2 contains the texts of long interviews that he conducted with principal protestors after eight years had passed. In these interviews, we look into the minds of those who objected to the books; we see how they think about education, about religion, and about social relations. Part 3 is an anatomy of the formal protests filed against the books; what objectors *saw* in the books and their grounds for objecting to them, and what actually *was* in them and why it was included. Here the opposing views are brought face-to-face in the kind of reasoned discussion that one wishes could have occurred at the time. In Part 4, Moffett describes the "something," the state of mind, that he thinks Kanawha County was a case of and what he thinks it means for us today.

It is in this Part 4 synthesis that the greatest value of this book lies. Seeing a commonality in seemingly unrelated conservative positions on various issues, Moffett ties together many of the threads interwoven into our national and global life in the eighties. His insights can help us to understand, and perhaps to deal with, attitudes such as those of some fanatical Muslims who wish to execute an author whose work, they say, "slanders" their founder, Mohammed.

Storm in the Mountains is a disturbing book, for a lot of reasons. For one, the conservative turn of events that surfaced in Kanawha County in 1974 has continued, in one form or another, until today. Censorship cases have increased, although textbooks are now seldom involved—chiefly, as Moffett shows, because of the influence of the West Virginia events on publishers. The exigencies of the marketplace determine what is published, and fear of controversy and attendant loss of sales has made textbook publishing pale and cowardly. No one wants another West Virginia, and books today are censored by not being published at all. The losses, Moffett says, are paralleled only by the burning of the libraries of Alexandria.

But Moffett has not dismissed the censors of Kanawha County, in spite of the fact that he has been hurt deeply—personally, professionally, and financially—by them, and in spite of the fact that they inadvertently have hurt us all. His wonderfully kind, thoughtful, sensitive and magnanimous study looks directly at the controversy, through it, and beyond it to a synthesis that is the most profound part of the book.

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Lesser men could have traced and documented the history of this affair. Lesser men could have returned to the site of the greatest trial of their lives and dutifully recorded the words of those who opposed them. But few, if any, have had the genuine humility and empathy to walk in the mental and spiritual moccasins of the opposers of one's life's work as James Moffett has. He knows that they genuinely believed what they said, and he respects that belief because it is rooted in spirituality, even though he sees it as *agnosis*—"not wanting to know."

And there—I believe—is where we meet ourselves.

For this state of mind, this *agnosis*, is deeply rooted in all of us, not just in Appalachians like me and the folks from Kanawha County. We all set some limits on our knowing and our children's knowing. We all fear losing our children to some extent, and to some extent and at some point, all of us fear our children's coming to think, behave, and believe in ways that we do not believe to be right or simply cannot understand. We fear the collapse of a known world into an unknown or strange one. This consciousness is really a fear of losing the world, and thereby losing ourselves. Books actually can do this to our children and to us, and deep inside we all know that. This is the state of mind from which the book protestors spoke, whatever their language, and it is a state of mind that none of us is immune to.

Perhaps, although Moffett does not suggest this, such a state of mind is a kind of spiritual flywheel on the intellect, a built-in safeguard to keep us from going too far too fast, from doing what Robert Pirsig called "going out of the mythos," off the tracks. We protect what we know—or think we know—for without it, there is nothing.

But this is my idea, not Moffett's. His is more transcendent. Listen to his closing sentences:

But defense is a losing game. Perpetual mobilization of an individual or a nation squanders resources. To defend against the Other is to ward off higher consciousness. It alone is equal to dealing with the world's conflicts, which stem, precisely, from our social need to limit knowing and identifying. The spiritual way is the practical way. As we identify so we know. Only by identifying with the culture-free and cosmic nature of a Christ or Buddha does one learn what they tried to teach us and assume their power. This means molting lesser selves.

James Moffett has molted quite a few. So may we all.

Dixie Dellinger teaches English at Burns Senior High School in Cleveland County, North Carolina. She is a Teacher Consultant with the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, Writing Project.

Harold Nelson

GRAMMAR GRAMS
by Stephen K. Tollefson
Harper & Row
1989

"Small Admonitions on Many Points"

For several years Stephen K. Tollefson was Writing and Speech Coordinator at the University of California at Berkeley. To help the "large numbers of staff members who had questions about writing," Tollefson wrote and distributed a series of one–page newsletters on topics in grammar and usage. He wrote the newsletters in no particular order, but he organized them into thirteen volumes for his collection, *Grammar Grams*.

Tollefson summarizes the book's purpose in the first two paragraphs of the introduction:

Dear Grammar Gram:

I'm turning to you for help. I do some writing in my job, and I'm also taking a writing course at night. I have some writing books which are quite helpful, but I feel like I need something else. Is there something brief and easy to read that I can use when I have a question about some aspect of writing? I can study my writing test, but I also need a quick guide.

Signed,
Where to Turn?

Dear Where:

Yes, there is help: the Grammar Grams. They provide short, almost telegraphic explanations of some problems in grammar, style, and usage as well as pointers and reminders for writing essays, letters, and memos.

The Grammar Gram

Tollefson then defines form, content, and audience. The Grammar Grams, according to the introduction, cover "general considerations about language and writing to provide a good background, the more common trouble spots in writing, particular areas that cause concern (*who* vs. *whom*, *that* vs. *which*, for example), and miscellaneous matters of writing, not only essays but also memos, letters, and reports." Tollefson emphasizes common trouble spots most heavily (thirty Grammar Grams), followed by miscellaneous matters (nineteen), particular areas (ten), and general considerations (four).

Grammar Grams is not a handbook. Instead, the book is a relatively short work focusing on practical matters in style. It falls generally into the same class as Baker's *The Practical Stylist*, Strunk and White's *The Elements of Style*, Trimble's *Conversations About Writing*, Williams's *Style*, and Zinsser's *On Writing Well*. As the lead for the introduction illustrates, Tollefson writes confidently, vigorously, somewhat assertively, with a tone similar to Baker's, Strunk and White's, and Williams's.

Tollefson writes,"The brevity of the Grammar Grams will appeal to people who find wading through a larger book to be a frustrating experience." I agree. I also agree with Tollefson when he recommends audiences. According to Tollefson, business people might keep *Grammar Grams* "by their desks for those times when questions of grammar, style, and usage arise"; students might use it as a supplementary reference; and teachers might suggest appropriate Grammar Grams to students who have specific problems, rather than taking the time unnecessarily for tutorial sessions.

The introduction is limited to an 8 1/2 by 11 page, as are each of the sixty–three Grammar Grams, so *Grammar Grams* is a thin book. It's also modestly bound, with a soft cover and two staples for binding. Teachers can recommend it as a supplementary text without feeling pangs of conscience over the total price of texts for a course—the book sells for only $6.95. It doesn't look cheap, though. It's nicely made. The black and yellow cover design is eyecatching, the logo of a telegram speeding through a circle appears at the top of each Grammar Gram for visual continuity, and the print is distinct and readable.

Only one minor aspect of the book bothers me—at times the humor probably worked better in the individual Grammar Grams than it does in a collection. The first Grammar Gram's title is "1500 Years of History in One Minute," and the last sentence of the Gram is "OK, it might have taken you longer than one minute to read this." I liked this line. But when I read the second Grammar Gram, I saw the same witty echoing of the title and lead in the conclusion, and again in the third, and again in the fourth, and so on. For me, the pattern became too predictable when I read the Grammar

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UPDATE UPDATE

CSW Presentations at NCTE

Presentations by CSW researchers at the Annual Convention, National Council of Teachers of English, Baltimore, Maryland, November 17-22, 1989:

Saturday, November 18

8:30-9:45 a.m.
Session B22: Teacher Research and Discoveries in Composition
Sandra R. Schecter, "Teacher Research: An Overview and a View from the Front"
Linda Norris, "Teachers and Students Who Are 'Making Thinking Visible' in Pittsburgh"
Jane Zachary Gargaro, "Using Collaborative Planning in the High School English Classroom"

10:00-11:15 a.m.
Research Roundtable
Sarah Warshauer Freedman, "Response to Student Writing"

2:00-3:15 p.m.
Session D3: Diversity in Young Children's Visions of Literacy
Anne Haas Dyson, "Diversity in Young Children's Visions of Literacy"

Session D24: Reports of the 1989 Promising Researchers
Melanie Sperling, "I Want to Talk to Each of You: Collaboration and the Teacher-Student Writing Conference"

CSW and NY City Portfolio Project

Under the directorship of Marcie Wolfe, with Sondra Perl and Richard Sterling, the New York City Portfolio Project and the Center for the Study of Writing are cooperating on a project to study the impact of portfolio assessment both on teaching practice and on students' writing. To carry out the study, the research team is collaborating with teachers who are implementing portfolio assessment in their classrooms. Project ethnographers are identifying themes and issues which emerge from teacher seminar discussions and teacher journals, and, based on portfolio information, case studies are being written up of student writing development. The research participants are also designing ways to describe portfolios which are congruent with Writing Project goals and activities.

BOOKS

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Grams assembled. I'm sure the pattern wouldn't have been as obvious if I had read the Grammar Grams intermittently.

Generally, though, I like the book very much. It's well written, witty, concise, and it gives good advice. I'm impressed with how solidly and unostentatiously Tollefson has based this advice on modern linguistics. He states in the introduction that "one general theme runs throughout *Grammar Grams*: because language constantly changes, our rules are merely guides ... The Grammar Grams try to make distinctions among what is generally accepted as law, what is a matter of style, and what is currently changing. In all cases, the Grammar Grams remind you to consider your audience." He is unlike the authors of several of the handbooks I've looked at recently who treat the rules as fixed and who apparently haven't studied modern grammars.

Teacher Research in Action

During the 1988-89 school year, twenty classroom teachers participated in the Bay Area Writing Project (BAWP) Teacher Research Project. Teachers met on the University of California, Berkeley, campus in bi-weekly seminars with facilitator Bob Tierney, developing research questions and designing their research studies. Other components of the seminar included the sharing of daily logs, discussion of selected research articles, and small response group work. In June, participants prepared reports based on their work. Their research questions yielded a rich and wide array of studies. Topics included detracking in an AP English class, a case study of a learning-disabled elementary student, using writing in science classes, mastering math word problems through writing, and the relations between talk and writing. In addition to the work of the teachers, the Center for the Study of Writing, in collaboration with BAWP, is conducting a meta-study which looks closely at what happens when teachers are engaged in classroom research. Sandra Schecter, Associate Director of the Center for the Study of Writing, and Bob Tierney have collected extensive data which Schecter has begun to analyze. Through the work of the first year, BAWP's Teacher Research Project has a promising beginning in addressing three specific problems of educational practice: expanding the role and influence of the teacher, improving the teaching and uses of writing, and determining the value of teacher research.

New CSW Book Series

The Center for the Study of Writing and Oxford University Press are cooperating on a new series, Social and Cognitive Studies in Writing and Literacy. The series is devoted to books which bridge research, theory, and practice as they explore social and cognitive processes in writing and expand our knowledge of literacy as an active constructive process—as students move from high school to college and the community. The first book in the series is *Reading-to-Write: Exploring a Cognitive and Social Process*, written by Linda Flower, Victoria Stein, John Ackerman, Margaret Kantz, Kathleen McCormick, and Wayne Peck.

Center Researchers Speak to the Writing Project

The Center for the Study of Writing Seminar in early July had as its primary audience the Fellows of the Bay Area Writing Project Summer Institute. Sarah Warshauer Freedman was the featured speaker, discussing her cross-cultural work with secondary school writing instruction in the U.S. and the U.K. . . . Freedman and BAWP Teacher Consultant Joan Cone, one of Freedman's collaborators on the cross-cultural study, were featured early in the fall at the South Coast Writing Project's annual renewal meeting for SCWrip Fellows (at U.C. Santa Barbara) . . . This summer, Melanie Sperling gave workshops on classroom ethnography to Summer Institute Fellows at the Central Coast Writing Project (at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo) and the South Coast Writing Project (at U.C. Santa Barbara) and, early this fall, at the first Writing Project retreat of the Great Valley Writing Project (Cal State Stanislaus) . . . Glynda Hull presented two workshops for the directors of the California Writing Project and the Pacific Region at their annual meeting at Asilomar. One workshop addressed the research on remediation that Hull is conducting with Mike Rose; the other addressed Hull's research on computer technology and writing.

I've taught an upper division course, Theories of Grammar, for some years now, and I believe it important to be able to think systematically about language. But when I write, I use grammar much like Joan Didion apparently does. In her essay "Why I Write" she says, "Grammar is a piano I play by ear, since I seem to have been out of school the year the rules were mentioned. All I know about grammar is its infinite power." Tollefson also emphasizes grammar's flexibility and its rhetorical power, not its rigidity, showing how writers can use grammar when thinking about their writing.

I've put my copy of *Grammar Grams* with my other books on style. Of these, *Grammar Grams* most closely resembles the "Bits and Pieces" chapter in *On Writing Well*, in which Zinsser has assembled "scraps and morsels—small admonitions on many points that I have collected under one, as they say, umbrella." Tollefson's small admonitions, like Zinsser's, are worth reading and applying.

Harold Nelson is a professor of English and literature at Minot State University, Minot, North Dakota. He is director of the Northern Plains Writing Project.

NWP Report:

A Multi-School Consortium to Promote Writing Across the Curriculum: The BACWAC Model

from H. Fil Dowling, Jr.

BACWAC—the Baltimore Area Consortium for Writing Across the Curriculum—is a unique branch of the Maryland Writing Project that brings together teachers from different grades and subject fields who are concerned with writing across the curriculum (w–a–c) in their schools. A consortium like BACWAC can have special impact because of its breadth, uniting and serving faculty from local four-year universities, two-year colleges, and public and private schools K-12. This report describes how BACWAC was created, how it operates, and how it promotes its goal of better w–a–c instruction in area schools and colleges.

BACWAC's Origins

BACWAC began in 1980 when several faculty from fourteen colleges and school systems near Baltimore, interested in w–a–c and energized by Barbara Walvoord of Loyola College, met and made plans to recruit local colleges and school systems as members, develop offerings on w–a–c subjects for teachers from those institutions, and seek a way to support these services.

The BACWAC founders aspired to establish a branch of the National Writing Project (NWP) in Baltimore. This seemed sensible, since BACWAC shared significant goals and beliefs of the NWP, among them that meaningful change in writing instruction is best accomplished not through transient consultants who briefly appear, never to be seen again, nor through packets of so-called "teacher-proof" materials, but rather through the cooperative efforts of classroom teachers from all disciplines in both colleges and schools. After eighteen months of planning and proposal-writing, the Maryland Writing Project (MWP), now housed at Towson State University, was formed, and BACWAC became a branch of the MWP.

Administratively, BACWAC's affiliation with the MWP means that clerical matters are handled for BACWAC by the Project's administrative assistant and student helpers. They conduct correspondence and phone calls; arrange for rooms, refreshments, and supplies for meetings; and oversee the typesetting and printing of BACWAC fliers and brochures. In return, BACWAC must make enough money from membership dues and workshop registration fees to cover its expenses plus a contribution of thirty percent of its income to the MWP's overhead. In effect, BACWAC has been financially self-supporting, since its membership dues and workshop fees each year have just about equaled its expenses for speakers and workshops plus its share of the MWP's overhead.

BACWAC's Operation

A coordinator and a steering committee guide BACWAC. The coordinator chairs the steering committee and serves as its liaison with the MWP. The steering committee directs the ongoing work of BACWAC, determining policy, planning programs, and generating publicity. This committee includes three faculty apiece from local four-year colleges, two-year colleges, and K-12 school systems. Teachers from various disciplines are represented; the 1988-89 steering committee includes teachers of English, social studies, biology, writing, and education. Committee members, elected annually at a BACWAC meeting from a nomination list prepared by the steering committee, serve two-year terms and may be re-elected once. The steering committee elects the BACWAC coordinator for a three-year term. The MWP Director serves ex-officio on the steering committee to provide year-by-year continuity and budgetary advice.

The steering committee has developed several subcommittees, some of which include teachers from outside the committee. Current subcommittees are Programs and Speakers, Publicity and Public Relations, and Membership and Committee Nominations. The latter subcommittee maintains an up-to-date list of area teachers interested in w–a–c to whom BACWAC can send announcements of its meetings and other service offerings. In practice, BACWAC's mailing list consists primarily of teachers who have attended previous BACWAC meetings; those who sign in at each meeting are added to the list.

The membership subcommittee also is concerned with institutional membership. Each fiscal year, BACWAC sends out bills for its annual membership dues: $150 for public and private school systems near Baltimore; $80 for more remote school systems and for colleges and universities. To promote membership, the annual solicitation letter, sent in July, stresses that BACWAC is able to exist only because of fees from its members. It also offers benefits to member institutions, such as discounted fees for the workshops it gives. BACWAC's institutional membership since 1981 has included, at one time or another (not all join every year), four four-year universities, eleven public and private four-year colleges

(e.g., Goucher, Morgan State, Loyola of Maryland), ten two-year public community colleges, seven public school systems, and two private ones—the Association of Maryland Independent Schools and the Baltimore Archdiocesan Schools.

Together, the coordinator, steering committee, and subcommittees develop and operate BACWAC's member services. BACWAC's clientele consists of all teachers in the greater Baltimore area who are interested in student writing in any discipline. Thus, the consortium's outreach is wide. At the BACWAC general meeting in February 1988, attendance was divided almost equally between college teachers, teachers from from junior and senior high schools, and teachers from elementary schools. Data from the October 1988 BACWAC meeting revealed a significant range in the disciplines of those attending: 52% taught English or writing; 21% were from other subject disciplines; 17% taught elementary school; and 10% were from related areas such as reading or special education. Thus, nearly half of the teachers at this meeting came from fields outside of English or writing.

Together, these membership and attendance data reveal something significant about BACWAC. The consortium has been able to bring together educators and teachers from widely different segments and fields of academia—people who otherwise probably would never even meet, let alone pursue collectively a shared educational objective.

BACWAC's Member Services

BACWAC's primary service functions have been to hold two general meetings a year, with speakers, demonstrations, and/or discussions on w–a–c subjects, and to conduct several workshops each year at local colleges and schools to help teachers implement w–a–c at their institutions. BACWAC has also offered training institutes that give area teachers the necessary theoretical and practical background to develop and give their own workshop presentations on w–a–c.

Meetings. Each February, BACWAC brings a nationally known speaker on w–a–c to Towson State University, BACWAC's host institution. That speaker gives a Thursday afternoon talk, free to all interested faculty, and two identical half-day Friday workshops with a maximum of sixty participants (thirty plus thirty). Speakers at these lectures and workshops have included, among others, Sondra Perl, Elaine Maimon, Linda Flower, Stephen Witte, Lee O'Dell, and Mary K. Healy.

The other annual meeting, held in October at different local schools and college campuses, usually features local speakers. There may be concurrent presentations by a history, a biology, and a psychology teacher on subjects that involve writing instruction in those and related fields or that focus on relevant broader subjects (for example, "Writer Anxiety"). Or, a particular mode or technique for writing instruction may be presented: in October 1987, BACWAC met at a community college for a demonstration of that school's extensive computer-instruction network, featuring the Writer's Workbench program. At some October meetings, those who attend have the chance to form special interest groups, which in some cases continue to meet throughout the school year. Members of a group might wish to read and review for one another recent books and articles on composition theory and practice. Another group might choose to share ideas for teaching one part of the writing process, such as revision, or a particular mode of instruction, such as peer response groups. Still other groups might bring together teachers in one discipline, like history or science, or one school level, like junior high school.

A recent sequence of BACWAC programs began with a general meeting in October 1988 at a community college in order to hear five speakers who had been trained in BACWAC or MWP Institutes talk on "Successful Teaching Techniques for W–A–C." These speakers (who presented concurrently) were from science, social studies, humanities, business, and elementary education. Then, in February 1989, at Towson State University, Dr. James Slevin of Georgetown University spoke and conducted workshops on "Reinvigorating W–A–C at the Institutional Level." In October 1989, BACWAC will meet at a local elementary or high school to hear teachers and administrators from several area schools and colleges report on activities that are actually going on in their schools to reinvigorate w–a–c.

Workshops. BACWAC offers workshops to Baltimore-area colleges and school systems on w–a–c topics. Teachers who present at these workshops come from a variety of disciplines and from different grade levels. All have been trained at BACWAC or MWP teacher institutes. Topics covered at these workshops, which are negotiated between BACWAC's Director of Workshops and each college or school system, include such choices as "integrating writing as an aid to learning," "coaching the process of writing," "planning and giving writing assignments," "responding to student writing," and "helping students write effectively in (a particular discipline)." In the last several years, twenty-nine BACWAC-sponsored workshops have been given at sixteen different four-year and two-year colleges and six school systems in and near Baltimore.

Training Institutes. In 1982 and 1983, thirty-four college teachers from various disciplines attended two BACWAC training institutes. The goal of these was to develop teachers who were knowledgeable about w–a–c and to help them polish a specific presentation which could then be offered at BACWAC workshops like those described above. In addition, some faculty who attended these institutes were so energized that they began to give w–a–c presentations at

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NWP at NCTE

National Writing Project meetings at the Annual Convention, National Council of Teachers of English, Baltimore, Maryland, November 17-22, 1989:

NWP Advisory Board and Regional Directors' Meeting: Thursday, November 16, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Chesapeake Room, Hyatt Regency.

NWP Directors' Meeting: Friday, November 17, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Baltimore Ballroom, Stouffer Harborplace Hotel.

NWP Social Hour (all welcome): Saturday, November 18, 5:00-7:00 p.m. in Severn Room, Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel.

A Multi-School Consortium to Promote Writing Across the Curriculum

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professional conventions and to publish journal articles on teaching writing in their fields. However, it has proven difficult to motivate college faculty to pay several hundred dollars to attend a BACWAC training institute involving forty contact hours over three months when, unlike K-12 teachers, they rarely can get their schools to pay the institute fee or get credit toward continued certification. Recently, a streamlined model for BACWAC institutes has been developed, one that can be presented on four consecutive days at a cost of just $100 to each participant. The first such institute will be offered by BACWAC in May 1990.

Conclusion

The bottom line is that BACWAC works. The consortium fills the need for an integrated effort to improve student writing in all subject disciplines and at all grade levels within a geographical area. Education leaders have frequently urged better coordination of efforts at different levels of education. A major segment of this desired school-college cooperation in the last fifteen years has been comprised of the various sites of the NWP. The BACWAC model, a branch of one of those sites, offers a proven way of bringing together teachers from many different institutions and grade levels to promote a specific aspect of instruction, writing across the curriculum.

H. Fil Dowling, Jr., is a professor of English at Towson State University, Baltimore, and coordinator of BACWAC. He is a Teacher Consultant with the Maryland Writing Project.

California's New Writing Assessment

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We have designed and implemented a wide-range achievement test which sets high standards of writing achievement for every student in California's schools. The prompts invite every student to write—our off-topic and no-response rates are very low—and at the same time challenge the most capable student writers. (This is not merely a competency test.) Classroom teachers have been involved in every phase of development and implementation. Leaders of the California Writing Project and the California Literature Project, along with other writing theorists and researchers, have shaped policy and test design from the beginning. Educational Testing Service's Bay Area Office has provided leadership, coordination, scoring services, data analysis, and reporting, bringing its years of experience to bear on the development of this project. California's Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bill Honig, has created a climate in which assessment reform is possible by encouraging comprehensive curriculum reform and insisting on tests which reflect enriched curricula. Dale Carlson, Director of the California Assessment Program, has provided inspired leadership, never wavering in his commitment to a writing test that would please and challenge teachers and improve English language arts instruction in California. These, we believe, are the main reasons for our success.

Reports and materials from California's new writing assessment can be ordered as follows: *Writing Assessment Handbook, Grade Eight* (revised edition, in press); *Writing Assessment Handbook, Grade Twelve* (revised edition, in press) from: **Publications Sales, State Department of Education, P.O. Box 271, Sacramento, CA 95802. Phone: (916) 445-1260.**

Writing Achievement of California Eight Graders, A First Look (California State Department of Education, 1988); Illustrative copy of *A Report to Teachers on Writing Achievement, Grade 8* (California State Department of Education, 1988); Illustrative copy of school and district report: *Survey of Academic Skills, Writing Achievement* (California State Department of Education, 1988); *Student Essays Illustrating the CAP Rhetorical Effectiveness Scoring System* (California State Department of Education, 1988) from: **Department of Education, California Assessment Program, P.O. Box 944272, Sacramento, CA 94244-2720. Phone: (916) 322-2200.**

Charles Cooper is a professor in the Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego, where he is also Coordinator of Writing Programs. Beth Breneman is a consultant for the California Assessment Program, California State Department of Education.

NWP News

Gateway Writing Project
University of Missouri-St. Louis

Michael Lowenstein is replacing Sue Post as Harris-Stowe Co-Director of the Gateway Writing Project.

Two Gateway teachers, Barbara Brooks of Pattonville High School's Write Place and former Co-Director Anne Wright of Hazelwood West's Writing Lab, have contributed several chapters to Pamela Farrell's *High School Writing Labs* (NCTE, 1989).

The West Virginia Writing Project
University of West Virginia

Constance Newton, a 1979 Summer Fellow from Hinton High School in Summers County, West Virginia, received one of the Outstanding Educator Merit Awards from the West Virginia Education Fund. One of the nine finalists for this award was Jan Fair, a 1986 Summer Fellow and Teacher Consultant from Jennings Randolph Elementary School in Randolph County, West Virginia.

Gwen Rosenbluth, a 1987 Summer Fellow at the West Virginia University site, was one of five finalists for the West Virginia Teacher of the Year Award sponsored by the West Virginia State Department of Education. Rosenbluth teaches at Morgantown High School in Monongalia County, West Virginia.

Lori Wroth, Teacher Consultant from Belle Elementary in Kanawha County, West Virginia, received an award from the Ashland Oil Company for outstanding teaching. Wroth, a kindergarten teacher, will travel to England in the fall and visit sites of the National Writing Project in Great Britain.

Fran Simone, State Director of the West Virginia Writing Project, received the 1989 Esteemed Colleague Award from the West Virginia English Language Arts Council.

Northern Plains Writing Project
Minot State University, North Dakota

Marsha Looysen, a Teacher Consultant in the Northern Plains Writing Project, was selected as the 1989–90 National Endowment for the Humanities teacher–scholar for North Dakota.

Louisiana Writing Project
Louisiana State University

The Louisiana State Department of Education, upon the recommendation of Wilmer Cody, Superintendent of Education in Louisiana, has allocated $250,000 for the establishment of a statewide network of Writing Project sites in Louisiana. In addition to providing funding for three existing sites, this first–time state funding will enable the development of the Louisiana Writing Project, a joint venture of the State Department of Education and participating universities.

Sarah Burkhalter, who is completing her doctoral research (which focuses on Writing Project issues) at the University of Texas, has joined the Louisiana State University faculty as the full–time Director of the Louisiana Writing Project.

Indiana Writing Project
Ball State University

The Indiana Writing Project will provide a public electronic bulletin board for writing teachers. Teachers can access the board by calling (317) 285-8414 with their modems set to 8 data bits, even parity, and one stop bit. (Almost any default modem setting will do.) The bulletin board system can accept calls at 300 bps, 1200 bps, or 2400 bps. It will automatically register first–time callers. Callers are asked to limit their time online to 30 minutes, since only one phone line is currently available to support the board.

Research, Recalibration, and Conversation

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ment is made up of considerably more than empirical knowledge (Buchmann, 1985; 1987).

By choosing the practical argument as the starting point for teacher action, I believe that Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso choose a somewhat limited framework within which to discuss the nature and use of teacher research. The rest of their paper offers a series of examples and insights which, in my view, show that teacher decision-making can, indeed, be recalibrated. But the teacher decision-making they describe is decidedly richer and more complex than can be captured by ideas of argumentation or knowledge utilization.

Buchmann (1988) proposes several images I find more useful to a consideration of thinking. She suggests *contemplation* as an integral part of practice; pursuit of knowledge that is *tentative* (that is, research as a way to challenge certainty and look beyond that taken-for-granted); and *conversation* as a way to share and use that research. Contemplation is appealing because it slows down or interrupts the thought/action connection and admits of new information and alternative action. Conversation is appealing because, unlike argumentation, it stresses knowledge's tentative nature and the multiple kinds of knowledge that go into complex teacher decisions ("argument" is a discourse form in which the object is to win rather than to exchange, and, presumably, the knowledge claim that wins is thought to be "authoritative"). These three ideas—that teaching is not only active, but contemplative; that conversation rather than argument is the appropriate mode for deliberating and communicating about research; and that knowledge must be pursued rigorously but also taken as tentative—are interrelated. They seem true to the spirit of Cazden, Diamondstone, and Naso's paper in that they stress appropriate social forms for knowledge exchange, time to consider one's actions, and the importance of interrupting ordinary ways of thinking by means of research.

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Susan Florio-Ruane is an associate professor of teacher education and director of the Learning Community Teacher Education Program at Michigan State University.

Teachers and Researchers: Roles and Relationships

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research, self-reflection is an important part of the product. As is the case with any research report, teacher-researchers have to decide how much to write in terms of ideas and theories, and how much to "write in terms of people" (Murray, 1982, p. 105). As a group, teacher research decisions on this issue may be different from that of researcher research.

How do teacher research writers hope to affect their teacher readers? Teacher research reports may emphasize theory and urge readers to be more receptive to innovative theories of writing instruction. Or they may emphasize changes in the author's own thinking and invite readers to reflect on the choices they make in their own classrooms. The first emphasis treats teacher research reports more as one-way presentations, whereas the second is closer to North's depiction of practitioner story telling as "reciprocal: an exchange, a duet, not a solo; and sometimes, though not always, a dialogue" (1987, p. 32).

Does the report present findings as provisional answers or as "what works"? There are explicit or implicit messages in teacher research reports about the extent to which the authors understand their knowledge to be provisional, and themselves "unfinished" as teachers. For example, teachers who believe in the "writing process" approach can use their findings to confirm their prior beliefs, or to raise new questions about writing instruction.

We suspect that if researcher research work were examined for answers to this last question, that work would also be frequently presented as testimonials to the originating theory rather than as provisional conclusions in a continuing search. But there may be special contextual influences pressing teacher research in this direction. Many of the teachers who are doing this research find themselves members of an isolated and embattled minority within their school district and even within their own school; and their research efforts in part validate their classroom practices in the face of pressures to revert to more reductionist methods and materials for teaching language arts and English.

Researcher Research on Writing

Given this valuable teacher research activity, we suggest three roles for researcher research work: as another source of information for teachers to take into account in recalibrating their practical arguments; as a medium for negotiating among teachers (individually or in groups) whose practical arguments about how best to teach writing to particular students are in conflict; and as collaborative partners in the research process.

As an alternative source of information

Considering the potential benefit of teacher research as a mechanism for bringing first to awareness and then to critical reflection a teacher's practical arguments, we see researcher research as providing important additional contributions to the same process. Someone else's research or theory can change practice in much the same way that insights taken from the teacher's own practice do. But instead of limiting the context of learning to the teacher's own situation, researcher research can provide a sample of situations and observations that is enlarged in number and, even more importantly, in kind.

Descriptions and theories about writing processes and products produced by cognitive psychologists, sociolinguists, and experts in other disciplines can—when they are not offered as prescriptions—amplify the practitioner's ability to gain new perspectives on what she knows and to reconceptualize/recalibrate the foundations of her practice. John Elliott (1985) writes of the importance of both kinds of knowledge for teachers:

> *If teachers continue to relegate their own insights to the status of private rather than public knowledge, and cling to the view that the latter is the domain of specialist researchers, they will never build that common stock of practical wisdom which is the mark of a professional group.* (p. 259)
>
> *The teacher who develops his or her theories solely from reflection upon experience, in ignorance of past and present deliberations of others, will simply "reinvent the wheel" rather than push beyond the existing state of professional knowledge. Although it could be argued that this is sufficient for the profes-*

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Teachers and Researchers: Roles and Relationships

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> *sional development of individual teachers, it is not ... sufficient for the development of the teaching profession generally through action research.* (p. 254)

Claims by researcher research that top-down transmission of new ideas is the only path seem as parochial as the opposite bottom-up claims by teacher research that teachers can improve practice more effectively by themselves.

Whether it is important which comes first—learning from one's own inquiry or from exposure to the inquiries of others—is not clear. Advocates of teacher research (e.g., Richmond, 1984) often argue that engaging in it helps to make ideas from other peoples' research more usable in rethinking the teacher's own practice. We need more longitudinal case studies of teacher change; and we need biographies of both influential and inert ideas—where they were generated and, for the influential ones, how they spread.

On this view, there is no one preferred kind of researcher research work. Specifically, we do not agree with Bolster (1983) that ethnographic research is more useful for teachers because the rich narrative descriptions that it produces are closer to the teacher's more familiar ways of seeing.

The impact of the research initiated by Charles Read (1971) on the surprisingly sophisticated patterns in young children's "invented spelling" is a case in point. The product of purely linguistic analyses of young children's texts, this research was picked up through some communication system (that itself deserves description), verified by a few teachers' own inquiries (e.g., Giacobbe, 1981) and became an important research-based premise in the new practical argument that first grade children can write from the first day in school.

As a medium for negotiating among conflicting practical arguments

Disagreement among teachers about how best to teach writing can be an important stimulus to further knowledge and improved practice. But this will happen only if the disagreement is faced and research planned that can show which methods work for which objectives with which students.

For example, in two articles (1986, 1989), Delpit argues that the "writing process" movement originated among white practitioners with predominantly white students and fails to meet the needs of black and other minority student writers who need more explicit teaching of conventions of syntax and style. This practical argument, held not only by Delpit but by other minority teachers whose responses to her first article she quotes in the second, deserves respect and careful consideration. It raises at least two questions. First, just what variation does exist in "writing process" classrooms on this aspect of teaching? Second, in the face of conflicting practices and practical arguments, what is the evidence about which strategies are most effective with minority students? Researcher research work, carefully planned with teachers who hold different views, should be able to help in answering these questions.

As active collaboration with teachers

Calls for more collaboration between members of the teacher research and researcher research groups are frequent these days—in the UK, for example, by John Richmond, an adviser for the Inner London Education Authority and co-editor of a British book of teacher research reports, *Becoming Our Own Experts* (1982), as well as here. And reports of successful collaboration are available—e.g., teacher Amanda Branscombe and researcher Shirley Heath on letter writing among high school students (reported by Branscombe in Goswami & Stillman) and teacher Leslee Reed with researchers Jana Staton and Joy Peyton on dialogue journals (Staton et al., 1988).

But differences in the priority given to questions—between lived experience vs. underlying structures, or between shorter and longer range time frames—can prevent members of either group from work they care most about. And differences in perceived status can also create interpersonal problems for such collaboration, despite the best of intentions on both sides.

In Conclusion

We are impressed with the variety of ways in which the roles of teaching and research are distributed in the writing field: divided between individuals working separately or collaboratively; or united in a single person who commutes between worlds or combines both kinds of work in responsibility to a single group of students. Perhaps it is one of the special strengths of writing as a curriculum field today that these variations are all contributing to the improvement of both our understanding and our practice.

Notes

1. For a discussion of the broader teacher research field, including but not limited to writing, see the *Harvard Education Newsletter*, August, 1988.

2. At least at Bread Loaf, research is being recommended as a valuable activity for students as well as teachers. "Working with teachers to answer real questions provides students with

intrinsic motivation for talking, reading, and writing, and has the potential for helping them achieve mature language skills" (Preface to Goswami & Stillman). Here too, examples exist. Heath and Branscombe collaborated with one of Branscombe's former students, Charlene Thomas (1986) over the language development of her young child; and Schwartz (1988) reports teacher-student collaborative research on the exchange of writing between two classrooms on an electronic network.

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Courtney Cazden is a professor of education at Harvard University and is author of Classroom Discourse: The Language of Teaching and Learning *(Heinemann, 1988). Paul Naso is Language Arts Curriculum Specialist in the Acton, Massachusetts public schools. Both Naso and Judy Diamondstone are graduate students at the Harvard School of Education.*

National Writing Project
5627 Tolman Hall
School of Education
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720
(415) 642-0963

Center for the Study of Writing
5513 Tolman Hall
School of Education
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720
(415) 643-7022

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